C7

The Novels of Captain Marryat

EDITED BY R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

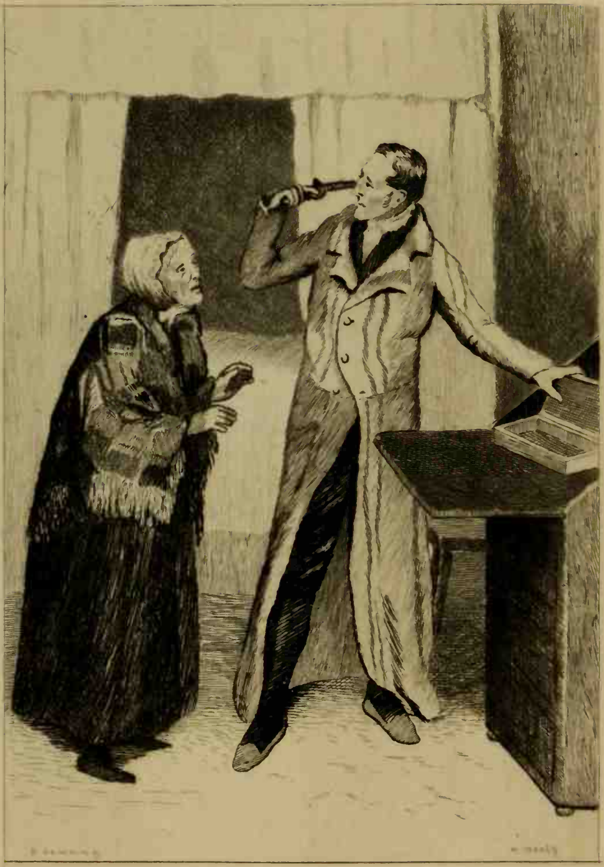
VOLUME FOURTEENTH

THE KING'S OWN

VOL. II.

This Edition, printed upon Hand-made Paper, is Limited to 750 *copies for America.*

Number 538



THE KING'S OWN

AND

THE PIRATE

BY

CAPTAIN MARRYAT

VOL. II.

LONDON
J. M. DENT AND CO.
BOSTON: LITTLE, BROWN AND CO.
MDCCCXCVI

Contents

Volume II

THE KING'S OWN

PAGE
Chapter XLI 1
Chapter XLII 15
Chapter XLIII 27
Chapter XLIV 39
Chapter XLV 48
Chapter XLVI 55
Chapter XLVII 60
Chapter XLVIII 69
Chapter XLIX 79
Chapter L 84
Chapter LI 90
Chapter LII 97
Chapter LIII 102
Chapter LIV 108
Chapter LV 115
Chapter LVI 121
Chapter LVII 128

PAGE
Chapter LVIII 135
Chapter LIX 140
Chapter LX 147

THE PIRATE

Chapter I 153
Chapter II 159
Chapter III 168
Chapter IV 173
Chapter V 180
Chapter VI 188
Chapter VII 194
Chapter VIII 205
Chapter IX 213
Chapter X 229
Chapter XI 236
Chapter XII 245
Chapter XIII 251
Chapter XIV 264
Chapter XV 274
Chapter XVI 285
Chapter XVII 297
Chapter XVIII 310

List of Etchings

VOLUME II

THE KING'S OWN

"SWEAR!" CONTINUED HE, PUTTING ONE OF THE PISTOLS TO HIS EAR . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

SHE TURNED TO THE IRISH, AND . . . ADDRESSED THEM IN THEIR OWN DIALECT 126

THE PIRATE

"SAVE ME! OH SAVE ME!" SHRIEKED TERESA . . 216

HE WATCHED THE RECEDING SCHOONER . . . 229

DON FELIX . . . WAS TOO BUSY WITH HIS CIGAR TO PAY ATTENTION TO HIS DAUGHTER . . . 247

THE SUPERIOR STRENGTH OF HAWKHURST HAD ENABLED HIM TO BEAR DOWN THE BODY OF HIS OPPONENT WITH HIS KNEE 294

Drawn by D. DOWNING.
Etched by W. WRIGHT-NOOTH.

The King's Own

Chapter XLI

All desperate hazards courage do create,
As he plays frankly who has least estate.

DRYDEN.

—— It were all one,
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it.

SHAKESPEARE.

SEYMOUR was soon weary of the endless noise and confusion to which he was subjected on board of the guardship, and he wrote to Captain M——, requesting that he might be permitted to join some vessel on active service, until the period should arrive when the former would be enabled to resume the command of his ship. The answer from his patron informed him, that the time of his renewal of his professional duties would be uncertain, not having hitherto derived much benefit from his return to England; that as the *Aspasia* was daily expected to arrive from the mission on which she had been despatched, and would then remain on Channel service, ready to be made over to him as soon as his health should be re-established, he would procure an order for him to join her as soon as she arrived. He pointed out to him that he would be more comfortable on board a ship in which he had many old messmates and friends than in any other, to the officers of which he would be a perfect stranger. That, in the meantime, he had procured leave of absence for him, and requested that he would pay him a visit at his cottage near Richmond, to the vicinity of which place he had removed, by the advice of his medical attendants.

Seymour gladly availed himself of this opportunity of seeing his protector, and after a sojourn of three weeks returned to Portsmouth, to join the *Aspasia*, which had, for some days, been lying at Spithead. Most of the commissioned, and many of the junior officers, who had served in the West Indies, were still on board of her, anxiously waiting for the return of Captain M——, whose value as a commanding officer was more appreciated from the change which had taken place. Seymour was cordially greeted by his former shipmates, not only for his own sake, but from the idea that his having rejoined the frigate was but a precursor of the re-appearance of Captain M—— himself.

There is, perhaps, no quality in man partaking of such variety, and so difficult to analyse as *courage*, whether it be physical or mental, both of which are not only innate, but to be acquired. The former, and the most universal, is most capriciously bestowed; sometimes, although rarely, Nature has denied it altogether. We have, therefore, in the latter instance, courage *nil*, as a zero, courage negative, half way up, and courage positive, at the top, which may be considered as "blood heat;" and upon this thermometrical scale the animal courage of every individual may be placed. Courage *nil*, or cowardice, needs no explanation. Courage negative, which is the most common, is that degree of firmness which will enable a person to do his duty when danger *comes to him*; he will not avoid danger, but he will not exactly seek it. Courage positive, when implanted in a man, will induce him to seek danger, and find opportunities of distinguishing himself where others can see none. Courage negative is a passive feeling, and requires to be roused. Courage positive is an active and restless feeling, always on the look-out.

An extreme susceptibility, and a phlegmatic indifference of disposition, although diametrically in opposition to each other, will produce the same results; in the former, it is mental, in the latter, animal courage. Paradoxical as it may appear, the most certain and most valuable description of *courage* is that which is acquired from the *fear of shame.* Further, there is no talent which returns more fold than courage, when constantly in exercise: for habit will soon raise the individual, whose index is near to zero, to the degree in the scale opposite to courage negative; and the possessor of courage negative will rise up to that of courage positive; although, from desuetude, they *will again sink to their former position.*

It is generally considered that men are *naturally brave;* but as, without some incentive, there would be no courage, I doubt the position. I should rather say that we were naturally cowards. Without incitement, courage of every description would gradually descend to the zero of the scale; the necessity of some incentive to produce it, proves that it is "against nature." As the ferocity of brutes is occasioned by hunger, so is that of man by "hungering" after the coveted enjoyments of life, and in proportion as their appetite is appeased, so is his courage decreased. If you wish animals to fight, they must not be over-fed; and if a nation wishes to have good officers, it must swell their pride by decorations, and keep them poor. There are few who do not recollect the answer of the soldier to his general, who had presented him with a purse of gold, in reward of a remarkable instance of gallantry, and who, a short time afterwards, requiring something extremely hazardous to be attempted, sent for the man, and expressed his wish that he would volunteer. "General," said he, "send a man who has NOT GOT a purse of gold."

The strongest incitement to courage is withdrawn by the possession of wealth. Other worldly possessions also affect it. Lord St Vincent, when he heard that any captain had married, used to observe, emphatically, "that he was d—d for the service,"—no compliment to the officer, but a very handsome one to the sex, as it implied that their attractions were so great, that we could not disengage ourselves from our thraldom—or, in fact, that there were no such things as bad or scolding wives.

Finally, this *quality*, which is considered as a *virtue*, and to entitle us to the rewards bestowed upon it by the fair sex, who value it above all others, is so wholly out of our control, that when suffering under sickness or disease, it deserts us; nay, for the time being, a violent stomach-ache will turn a hero into a poltroon.

So much for a dissertation on courage, which I should not have ventured to force upon the reader, had it not been to prepare him for the character which I am about to introduce; and when it is pointed out how many thousands of officers were employed during the last war, I trust it will not be considered an imputation upon the service, by asserting that there were some few who *mistook their profession*.

The acting captain of the *Aspasia*, during the early part of his career in the service, had there been such a thermometer as I have described, by which the heat of temperament in the party would have been precisely ascertained, on placing its bulb upon the palm of his hand, would have forced the mercury something between the zero and courage negative, towards the zero,—"more yes than no," as the Italian said; but now that he was a married man, above fifty years of age, with a large family, he had descended in the scale to the absolute zero.

It may then be inquired, why he requested to be employed during the war? Because he liked full pay and prize-money when it could be obtained without risk, and because his wife and family were living on shore in a very snug little cottage at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, which cottage required nothing but furniture and a few other trifles to render it complete. Marriage had not only subtracted from the courage of this worthy officer, but, moreover, a little from his honesty. Captain Capperbar (for such was his name) should have been brought up as a missionary, for he could *convert* anything, and *expend* more profusely than any Bible Society. The name by which he had christened his domicile was probably given as a sort of salvo to his conscience. He called it the "*Ship;*" and when he signed his name to the expense books of the different warrant officers, without specifying the exact use to which the materials were applied, the larger proportions were invariably expended, by the general term, for "*Ship*'s use." He came into harbour as often as he could, always had a demand for stores to complete, and a defect or two for the dock-yard to make good, and the admiral, who was aware of Mrs Capperbar being a near resident, made every reasonable allowance for his partiality to Spithead. But we had better introduce the captain, sitting at his table in the fore-cabin, on the day of his arrival in port, the carpenter having obeyed his summons.

"Well, Mr Cheeks, what are the carpenters about?"

"Weston and Smallbridge are going on with the chairs—the whole of them will be finished to-morrow."

"Well?"

"Smith is about the chest of drawers, to match the one in my Lady Capperbar's bedroom."

"Very good. And what is Hilton about?"

"He has finished the spare-leaf of the dining-table, sir; he is now about a little job for the second lieutenant."

"A job for the second lieutenant, sir? How often have I told you, Mr Cheeks, that the carpenters are not to be employed, except on ship's duty, without my special permission?"

"His standing bed-place is broke, sir; he is only getting out a chock or two."

"Mr Cheeks, you have disobeyed my most positive orders.—By-the-bye, sir, I understand you were not sober last night."

"Please your honour," replied the carpenter, "I wasn't drunk—I was only a little fresh."

"Take you care, Mr Cheeks. Well, now, what are the rest of your crew about?"

"Why, Thomson and Waters are cutting out the pales for the garden, out of the jib-booms; I've saved the heel to return."

"Very well, but there won't be enough, will there?"

"No, sir; it will take a hand-mast to finish the whole."

"Then we must expend one when we go out again. We can carry away a topmast, and make a new one out of the hand-mast, at sea. In the meantime, if the sawyers have nothing to do, they may as well cut the palings at once. And now, let me see—oh! the painters must go on shore, to finish the attics."

"Yes, sir, but my Lady Capperbar wishes the *jealowsees* to be painted vermilion: she says, it will look more rural."

"Mrs Capperbar ought to *know enough* about ship's stores, by this time, to be aware that we are only allowed three colours. She may choose or mix them as she pleases; but as for going to the expense of buying paint, I can't afford it. What are the rest of the men about?"

"Repairing the second cutter, and making a new mast for the pinnace."

"By-the-bye—that puts me in mind of it—have you expended any boat's masts?"

"Only the one carried away, sir."

"Then you must expend two more. Mrs C—— has just sent me off a list of a few things that she wishes made, while we are at anchor, and I see two poles for clothes-lines. Saw off the sheave-holes, and put two pegs through at right angles—you know how I mean."

"Yes, sir. What am I to do, sir, about the cucumber frame? My Lady Capperbar says that she must have it, and I haven't glass enough—they grumbled at the yard last time."

"Mrs C—— must wait a little. What are the armourers about?"

"They have been so busy with your work, sir, that the arms are in a very bad condition. The first lieutenant said yesterday that they were a disgrace to the ship."

"Who dared say that?"

"The first lieutenant, sir."

"Well, then, let them rub up the arms, and let me know when they are done, and we'll get the forge up."

"The armourer has made six rakes, and six hoes, and the two little hoes for the children; but he says he can't make a spade."

"Then I'll take his warrant away, by Heaven, since he does not know his duty. That will do, Mr Cheeks. I shall overlook your being in liquor, this time; but take care—send the boatswain to me."

"Yes, sir," and the carpenter quitted the cabin.

"Well, Mr Hurley," said the captain, as the boatswain stroked down his hair, as a mark of respect, when he entered the cabin, "are the cots all finished?"

"All finished, your honour, and slung, except the one for the *babby*. Had not I better get a piece of duck for that?"

"No, no—number seven will do as well; Mrs C—— wants some *fearnought*, to put down in the entrance hall."

"Yes, your honour."

"And some cod-lines laid up for clothes-lines."

"Yes, your honour."

"Stop, let me look at my list—'Knife-tray, meat-screen, leads for window-sashes.'—Ah! have you any hand-leads not on charge?"

"Yes, your honour, four or five."

"Give them to my steward.—'Small chair for Ellen—canvas for veranda.'—Oh! here's something else—have you any painted canvas?"

"Only a waist-hammock-cloth, sir, ready fitted."

"We must expend that; 'no old on charge.' Send it on shore to the cottage, and I shall want some pitch."

"We've lots of that, your honour."

"That will do, Mr Hurley; desire the sentry to tell my steward to come here."

"Yes, your honour." (Exit boatswain, and enter steward.)

This personage belonged to the party of marines, who had been drafted into the ship—for Captain Capperbar's economical propensities would not allow him to hire a servant brought up to the situation, who would have demanded wages independent of the ship's pay. Having been well drilled at barracks, he never answered any question put to him by an officer without recovering himself from his usual "stand at ease" position—throwing shoulders back, his nose up in the air, his arms down his sides, and the palms of his hands flattened on his thighs. His replies were given with all the brevity that the question would admit, or rapid articulation on his own part would enable him to confer.

"Thomas, are the sugar and cocoa ready to go on shore?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't forget to send that letter to Mr Gibson, for the ten dozen port and sherry."

"No, sir."

"When it comes on board, you'll bring it on shore a dozen at a time, in the hair trunk."

"Yes, sir."

"Mind you don't let any of the hay peep outside."

"No, sir."

"Has the cooper finished the washing-tubs?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the small kids?"

"No, sir."

"Have you inquired among the ship's company for a gardener?"

"Yes, sir; there's a marine kept the garden of the major in the barracks."

"Don't forget to bring him on shore."

"No, sir."

"Recollect, too, that Mrs Capperbar wants some vinegar—the boatswain's is the best—and a gallon or two of rum—and you must corn some beef. The harness cask may remain on shore, and the cooper must make me another."

"Yes, sir."

"Master Henry's trousers—are they finished yet?"

"No, sir; Spriggs is at them now. Bailly and James are making Miss Ellen's petticoats."

"And the shoes for Master John—are they finished?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Master Henry's?"

"No, sir. Wilson says that he has lost Master Henry's measure."

"Careless scoundrel; he shall have four-water grog for a week; and, steward, take three bags of bread on shore, and forty pounds of flour."

"Yes, sir."

"That's all.—Oh, no—don't forget to send some peas on shore for the pig."

"No, sir," and the steward departed to execute his variety of commissions.

The present first lieutenant of the *Aspasia,* who, upon the promotion of the former, had been selected by Captain M—— previous to his quitting the ship, was an excellent officer, and pleasant light-hearted messmate, very superior in talent and information to the many.

The conduct of Captain Capperbar was a source of annoyance to him, as he frequently could not command the services of the different artificers when they were required for the ship. He had, however, been long enough in the service to be aware that it was better to make the best of it, than to create enemies by impeaching the conduct of his superior officer. As the command of Captain Capperbar was but temporary, he allowed him to proceed without expostulation, contenting himself with turning his conduct into a source of conversation and amusement.

"Well, Prose, how do you like the new skipper?" inquired Seymour, soon after his arrival on board.

"Why—I do declare, I can hardly tell. He's a very good-tempered man; but he don't exactly treat us midshipmen as if we were officers or gentlemen; and as for his wife, she is really too bad. I am sent every day on shore to the cottage, because I belong to the captain's gig. They never ask me to sit down, but set me to work somehow or another. The other day he had a boat's crew on shore digging up a piece of ground for planting potatoes, and he first showed me how to cut the *eyes*, and then gave me a knife, and ordered me to *finish the whole bag* which lay in the field, and to see that the men worked properly at the same time. I never cut potatoes into little bits before, except at table after they were boiled."

"Well, that was too bad; but however, you'll know how to plant potatoes in future—there's nothing like knowledge."

"And then he sends the nurse and children for an airing, as he calls it, on the water, and I am obliged to take them. I don't like pulling maid-servants about."

"That's quite a matter of taste, Prose; some midshipmen *do*."

"What do you think Mrs Capperbar asked me to do the other day?"

"I'm sure I can't guess."

"Why, to shell peas."

"Well, did you oblige her?"

"Why, yes, I did; but I did not like it,—and the other day the captain sent me out to walk with the nurse and children, that I might carry Master Henry, if he was tired."

"They have observed the versatility of your genius."

"She made me hunt the hedges for a whole morning after eggs, because she was convinced that one of the hens laid astray."

"Did you find any?"

"No, and when I came back to tell her so, she got into a rage, and threatened to make the captain flog me."

"The devil she did!"

"A devil she is," continued Prose. "She runs about the house—'Captain Capperbar' this,—'Captain Capperbar' that—'I will'—'I will not'—'I insist'—'I am determined'—But," continued Prose, "as you belonged to the captain's gig before, you will of course take her again, and I shall be very glad to give the charge up to you."

"Not for the world, my dear Prose: what may insure your promotion would be my ruin. I never nursed a child or shelled a pea in my life; the first I should certainly let fall, and the second I probably should eat for my trouble. So pray continue at your post of honour, and I will go for the fresh beef every morning as you were accustomed to do when we were last in port."

Captain M—— did not receive the immediate benefit which he had anticipated from a return to his native land. Bath, Cheltenham, Devonshire, and other places were recommended one after the other by the physicians, until he was tired of moving from place to place. It was nearly two years before he felt his health sufficiently re-established to resume the command of the *Aspasia*, during which period the patience of his officers was nearly exhausted; and not only was all the furniture and fitting up of the cottage complete, but Captain Capperbar had provided himself with a considerable stock of materials for repairs and alterations. At last a letter from the captain to Macallan gave the welcome intelligence that he was to be down at Portsmouth in a few days, and that the ship was ordered to fit for foreign service.

We must not omit to mention here, that during these two years Seymour had been able to procure frequent leave of absence, which was invariably passed at the M'Elvinas: and that the terms of intimacy on which he was received at the hall, and his constant intercourse with Emily, produced an effect which a more careful mother would have guarded against. The youth of eighteen and the girl of sixteen had feelings very different from those which had actuated them on their first acquaintance; and Seymour, who was staying at the M'Elvinas when the expected arrival of Captain M—— was announced, now felt what pain it would be to part with Emily. The intelligence was communicated in a letter from Prose, when he was sitting alone with M'Elvina, and the bare idea of separation struck him to the heart.

M'Elvina, who had often expressed his opinion on the subject to his wife, had been anxious that our hero should be sent on a foreign station, before he had allowed a passion to take so deep a root in his heart that, to eradicate it, would be a task of great effort and greater pain. Aware, from the flushed face of Seymour, of what was passing within, he quietly introduced the subject, by observing that in all probability, his favourite, Emily, would be married previous to his return—pointing out that an heiress of so large a property would have a right to expect to unite herself with one in the highest rank of society.

Seymour covered his face with his hands, as he leant over the table. He had no secrets from M'Elvina, and acknowledged the truth of the observation. "I have brought up the subject, my dear boy," continued M'Elvina, "because I have not been blind, and I am afraid that you will cherish a feeling which can only end in disappointment. She is a sweet girl; but you must, if possible, forget her. Reflect a moment. You are an orphan, without money, and without family, although not without friends, which you have secured by your own merit; and you have only your courage and your abilities to advance you in the service. Can it, then, be expected, that her parents would consent to an union — or would it be honourable in you to take any advantage of her youthful prepossession in your favour, and prevent her from reaping those advantages that her fortune and family entitle her to?"

Seymour felt bitterly the justice of the remark; a few tears trickled through his fingers, but his mind was resolved. He had thought to have declared his love before his departure, and have obtained an acknowledgment on her part; but he now made a firm resolution to avoid and to forget her. "I shall follow your advice, my dear sir, for it is that of a friend who is careful of my honour; but if you knew the state of mind that I am in!—How foolish and inconsiderate have I been!—I will not see her again."

"Nay, that would be acting wrongly; it would be quite unpardonable, after the kindness which you have received from Mrs Rainscourt, not to call and wish them farewell. You must do it, Seymour. It will be an exertion, I acknowledge; but, if I mistake not his character, not too great a one for William Seymour. Good-night, my dear boy."

On the ensuing morning, Seymour, who had fortified himself in his good resolutions, walked to the hall to announce his approaching departure on foreign service, and to take his farewell, his last farewell, of Emily. He found the carriage at the door, and Mrs Rainscourt in her pelisse and bonnet, about to pay a visit at some distance. She was sorry at the information, for Seymour was a great favourite, and delayed her departure for a quarter of an hour to converse with him; at the end of which, Emily, who had been walking, came into the library. Communicating the intelligence to her daughter, Mrs Rainscourt then bade him farewell, and expressing many wishes for his health and happiness, was handed by him into the carriage, and drove off, leaving Seymour to return to the library, and find himself—the very position he had wished to avoid—alone with Emily.

Emily Rainscourt was, at this period, little more than sixteen years old; but it is well known that, in some families, as in some countries, the advance to maturity is much more rapid than in others. Such was the case with our heroine, who, from her appearance, was generally supposed to be at least two years older than she really was, and in her mind she was even more advanced than in her person.

Seymour returned to the library, where he found Emily upon the sofa. Her bonnet had been thrown off, and the tears that were coursing down her cheeks, were hastily brushed away at his entrance. He perceived it, and felt his case to be still more embarrassing.

"When do you go, William?" said Emily, first breaking silence.

"To-morrow morning. I have called to return my thanks to your mother, and to you, for your kindness to me;—I shall ever remember it with gratitude."

Emily made no answer, but a deep sigh escaped.

"I shall," continued Seymour, "be away perhaps for years, and it is doubtful if ever we meet again. Our tracks in life are widely different. I am an orphan, without name or connection—or even home, except through the kindness of my friends: they were right when, in my childhood, they christened me the 'King's Own,' for I belong to nobody else. You, Miss Rainscourt" (Emily started, for it was the first time that he had ever called her so, after the first week of their acquaintance), "with every advantage which this world can afford, will soon be called into society, in which I never can have any pretence to enter. You will, in all probability, form a splendid connection before (if ever) we meet again. You have my prayers, and shall have them, when seas divide us, for your happiness."

Seymour was so choked by his feelings, that he could say no more—and Emily burst into tears.

"Farewell, Emily! God in Heaven bless you," said Seymour, recovering his self-possession.

Emily, who could not speak, offered her hand. Seymour could not control himself; he pressed her lips with fervour, and darted out of the room.

Emily watched him, until he disappeared at the winding of the avenue and then sat down and wept bitterly. She thought that he was unkind, when he ought to have been most fond—on the eve of a protracted absence. He might have stayed a little longer. He had never behaved so before, and she retired to her room, with her heart panting with anguish and disappointment. She felt how much she loved him, and the acknowledgment was embittered by the idea that this feeling was not reciprocal.

The next morning, when the hour had passed at which

Seymour had stated that he was to leave the spot, Emily bent her steps to the cottage, that she might, by conversation with her friend Mrs M'Elvina, obtain, if possible, some clue to the motives which had induced our hero to behave as we have narrated.

Susan was equally anxious to know in what manner Seymour had conducted himself, and soon obtained from Emily the information which she required. She then pointed out to her, as her husband had done to Seymour, the improbability, if not impossibility, of any happy result to their intimacy, and explained the honourable motives by which Seymour had been actuated,—the more commendable, as his feelings on the subject were even more acute than her own.

The weeping girl felt the truth of her remarks, as far as the justification of Seymour was attempted. Satisfied with the knowledge that he loved her, she paid little attention to the more prudent part of the advice, and made a resolution in his favour, which, as well as her attachment (unlike most others formed during the freshness of the heart), through time and circumstance, absence on his part, temptations on hers, continued steadfast and immovable to the last.

Chapter XLII

First Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard.

MILTON.

ONCE more the *Aspasia* flew upon the wings of the northern gale, to secure her country's dominion over far-distant seas; and many an anxious eye, that dwelt upon the receding shore, and many an aching heart, that felt itself severed from home and its endearments, did she carry away in her rapid flight. Some there were, to whom the painful reflection presented itself—"Shall I e'er behold those cherished shores again?"

This, however, was but a transitory feeling, soon chased away by Hope, who delights to throw her sunny beams on the distance, while she leaves the foreground to the dark reality of life. All felt deeply, but there was none whose mental sufferings could be compared with those of Seymour.

Captain M—— opened his sealed orders, and found that he was directed to proceed forthwith to the East Indies. He had been prepared for this, by indirect hints given to him by the First Lord of the Admiralty. There is nothing so tedious as making a passage, and of all others, that to the East Indies is the most disagreeable, especially at the time of which we are writing, when Sir H. Popham had not added the Cape of Good Hope to the colonial grandeur of the country,—so that, in fact, there was no resting place for the wanderer, tired with the unvarying monotony of sky and water. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with stating, that at the end of three months his Majesty's ship *Aspasia* dropped her anchor in Kedgeree Roads, and the captain of the same pilot schooner, who had taken charge of her off the Sand-heads, was put in requisition to convey Captain M—— and his despatches up to Calcutta. Courtenay, Macallan, and Seymour were invited to be of the party; and, the next morning, they shifted on board the pilot schooner, and commenced the ascent of the magnificent and rapid Hoogly.

The pilot captain, who, like all those who ply in this dangerous and intricate navigation, had been brought up to it from his youth, was a tall gaunt personage, of about fifty years of age, and familiar in his manner. Whether he had found some difficulty in keeping in check the passengers from the Indiamen, whom he had been in the habit of taking up to Calcutta (whose spirits were, in all probability, rather buoyant upon their first release from the confinement of a tedious passage), or whether from a disposition naturally afraid of encroachment, he was incessantly informing you that "he was captain of his own ship." Although in all other parts he was polite, yet upon this he paid no respect to persons, as the governor-general and his staff, much to their amusement, and occasionally to their annoyance, found to be the case, when they ascended the river under his charge.

"Happy to see you on board, Captain M——. Hope you will make yourself comfortable, and call for everything you want. Boy, take this trunk down into the state cabin. Happy to see you, gentlemen, and beg you will consider yourselves quite at home—at the same time beg to observe that I'm '*Captain of my own ship.*'"

"So you ought to be," replied Captain M——, smiling, "if your ship was no larger than a nutshell. I'm captain of *my* own ship, I can assure you."

"Very glad we agree upon that point, Captain M——. Young gentleman," continued he, addressing himself to Courtenay, "you'll oblige me by not coming to an anchor on my hen-coops. If you wish to sit down, you can call for a chair."

"Rather annoying," muttered Courtenay, who did not much like being called "young gentleman."

"A chair for the young gentleman," continued the captain of the schooner. "Starboard a little, Mr Jones—there is rather too much cable out, till the tide makes stronger. I presume you are not used to *kedging*, captain. It's a very pretty thing, as you will acknowledge. Starboard yet. Give her the helm quick, Mr Thompson. Why, sir, do you know that I was once very nearly on shore on the tail of this very bank, because a young lady, who was going up to Calcutta, would take the helm? The mate could not prevent her, she refused to let it go, and, when I commanded her, told me, with a laugh, that she could steer as well as I could. I was obliged to prove to her, in rather an unpleasant manner, that I was captain of my own ship."

"Why, you did not flog her, did you, captain?"

"Why, no, not exactly that, but I was obliged to jerk the wheel round so quick, that I sprained both her wrists before she had time to let it go. It very near produced a mutiny. The girl fainted, or pretended to do so, and all the gentlemen passengers were in high wrath—little thinking, the fools, that I had saved their lives by what they called my barbarity. However, I told them, as soon as the danger was over, that I was captain of my own ship. Sweet, pretty girl too, she was. We were within an inch of the bank, the tide running like a sluice, and should have turned the turtle the moment that we had struck. Such a thing as carrying politeness too far. If I had not twisted the wheel out of her hands as I did, in two minutes more the alligators would have divided her pretty carcass, and all the rest of us to boot. No occasion for that, Captain M——. There's plenty of black fellows for them floating up and down all day long, as you will see."

"They throw all the dead into the river, do they not?"

"All, sir. This is a continuation of the sacred river, the Ganges, and they believe that it ensures their going to heaven. Have you never been in India before, sir?"

"Never."

"Nor these three gentlemen?"

"Neither of them."

"Oh, then," cried the captain, his face brightening up at the intelligence, as it gave him an opportunity of indulging in his long stories, and at the same time of amusing his passengers; "then, perhaps, you would not object to my explaining things to you as we go along?"

"On the contrary, we shall feel much indebted to you."

"Observe," said the captain, looking round as if to find an object to decide him where to begin—"do you see that body floating down the river, with the crow perched upon it, and that black thing flush with the water's edge which nears it so fast—that's the head of an alligator; he is in chase of it."

The party directed their attention to the object; the alligator, which had the appearance of a piece of black wood floating down the stream, closed with the body; his upper jaw rose clear out of the water, and descended upon his prey, with which he immediately disappeared under the muddy water.

"By the Lord, Mr Crow, but you'd a narrow chance then," observed the captain; "you may thank your stars that you did not lose your life as well as your breakfast. Don't you think so, young gentleman?" continued the captain, addressing Courtenay.

"I think," observed Courtenay, "that Mr Crow was not exactly captain of his own ship."

"Very true, sir. That point of land which we are just shutting in, Captain M——, is the end of Saugor Island, famous for Bengal tigers, and more famous once for the sacrifice of children. You have heard of it?"

"I have heard of it; but if you have ever witnessed the scene, I shall be obliged by your narration."

"I did once, Captain M——, but nothing would ever induce me to witness it again. I am very glad that government has put a stop to it by force. You are aware that the custom arose from the natives attempting to avert any present or anticipated calamity, by voting a child to propitiate the deity. On a certain day they all assembled in boats, with their victims, attended by their priests and music, and decorated with flowers. The gaiety of the procession would have induced you to imagine that it was some joyous festival, instead of a scene of superstition and of blood. It would almost have appeared as if the alligators and sharks were aware of the exact time and place, from the numbers that were collected at the spot where the immolation took place. My blood curdles now when I think of it. The cries of the natives, the shouting and encouraging of the priests, the deafening noise of the tom-toms, mixed with the piercing harsh music of the country, the hurling and tossing of the poor little infants into the water, and the splashing and contention of the ravenous creatures as they tore them limb from limb, within a few feet of their unnatural parents—the whole sea tinged with blood, and strewed with flowers! The very remembrance is sickening to me.

"One circumstance occurred, more horrid than all the rest. A woman had devoted her child—but she had the feelings of a mother, which were not to be controled by the blindest superstition. From time to time she had postponed the fulfilment of the vow, until the child had grown into a woman—for she was thirteen years old, which in this country is the marriageable age. Misfortune came on, and the husband was told by the priests that the deity was offended, and that the daughter must be sacrificed, or he would not be appeased. She was a beautiful creature for a native, and was to have been married about the very time that she was now to be sacrificed. I see her now—she was dark in complexion, as they all are, but her features were beautifully small and regular, and her form was perfect symmetry. They took off the gold ornaments with which she was decorated, and in their avarice removed her garments, as she implored and entreated on her knees in vain. The boat that she was in was closer to the shore than the others, and in shallow water. They forced her over the gunwale—she alighted on her feet, the water being up to her middle, and, by a miracle, escaped, before a shark or alligator could reach her, and gained the beach. I thought that she was saved, and felt more happy than if I had received a sack of rupees. But no—they landed from the boat, and pushed her into the water with long poles, while she screamed for pity. A large alligator swam up to her, and she fell senseless with fright, just before he received her in his jaws. So I don't think the poor creature suffered much after that, although the agony of anticipation must have been worse than the reality. That one instance affected me more than the scores of infants that were sacrificed to Moloch."

Distressing as the narrative was, there was a novelty and interest in it, and a degree of feeling unexpectedly shown by the captain of the pilot vessel, that raised him in the opinion of Captain M——, who became anxious to obtain further information.

"They consider the river as sacred—do you imagine that they consider the alligators to be so?"

"I rather think that they do, sir, although I only judge from what I have seen, as I have read nothing about it. At all events, the presence of an alligator will not prevent them from performing a customary duty of their religion, which is, bathing in the sacred river. The people come down to bathe at the different ghauts, and if an alligator takes one of them down, it will not prevent the others from returning the next morning, even if one was to be taken away each succeeding day. I rather think that, in the discharge of a sacred duty, they consider all accidents of this kind as according to the will of the Deity, and a sort of passport to heaven. A party of murderous villains turned this feeling of their countrymen to good account at a ghaut up the country. The natives had bathed there for centuries without any accident on record, when, one day, a woman disappeared under the water, from amongst the rest, and every day for many weeks the same untoward circumstance occurred. It was supposed to be an alligator—but it was afterwards ascertained, that this party of thieves had concealed themselves in the jungle, on the opposite side of the river, which at that part was deep, but not very wide, and had a rope with a hook to it, extended under water to the ghaut, where the people bathed. Some of the gang mingled with the bathers, and slipping down under water, made the rope fast to the legs of one of the women, who was immediately hauled under the water by his comrades, concealed on the opposite side. You may be wondering why the rascals took so much trouble; but, sir, the women of this country, especially those of high caste, and who are rich, wear massive gold bangles upon their arms and legs, besides ornaments of great value on other parts of their person, and they never take them off when they bathe, as they are fastened on so as not to be removed. It was from the observation, that this supposed alligator was very nice in his eating, as he invariably took away a Brachmany or a Rajahpoot girl, that the plot was discovered.—We are now abreast of the Diamond Harbour, a sad unhealthy place, I can assure you. Port a little, Mr Jones—give five or six fathoms more cable; we drag too fast. This is a very dangerous corner that we are turning now. When we are about eight miles above we shall bring up, and go to dinner. I beg your pardon, young gentleman, but I'll thank you to leave the compasses alone. You'll excuse me, but I command this vessel."

The pilot schooner rounded the point in safety, and in less than an hour brought up abreast of a large village. The captain stated, that before dinner was over, the tide would be too slack to go further on, and that he should remain there during the ebb, and not weigh till early the next morning. If, therefore, Captain M—— and the gentlemen felt inclined to take a stroll after dinner, a boat was at their service.

This was gladly assented to, and when dinner was over, the captain of the schooner ordered the boat to be manned, and at the request of Captain M——, accompanied them on shore. On their landing, the flocking together of the inhabitants, and the noise of the music, announced that something more than usual was going on. On inquiry, the pilot captain informed them, that the rajah of the village, who had ascended the river to perform his vows at some distant shrine, had not returned at the time that he was expected, and that the natives were afraid that some accident had occurred, and were in consequence propitiating the deity.

"You will now have an opportunity of beholding a very uncommon sight, which is the propitiatory dance to Shiva. There is no occasion for hurrying on so fast, young gentleman," continued the captain to Courtenay; "they will continue it till midnight."

"How excessively annoying that 'captain of his own ship' is," observed Courtenay to Macallan. "'Young gentleman!' As if he could not see my epaulet."

"And yet there is nothing particularly to be affronted about. You *have* a very youthful appearance, and surely you are not displeased at being called a gentleman."

"Why, no; but that is the reason why I am annoyed, because I cannot take it up."

The party soon arrived at the site of the performance, which was on a small arena at the foot of a pagoda. The pagoda, which was not large, was evidently of very ancient date, and the carvings in bas-relief, which were continued round on its sides, representing processions in honour of the deity, were of a description much superior to the general execution of the Hindoos. The summit had bowed to time; perishable art had yielded to eternal nature—a small tree, of the acacia species, had usurped its place, and, as it waved its graceful boughs to the breeze, appeared like a youthful queen reigning over and protecting the various shrubs and plants which luxuriated in the different crevices of the building.

The dance was performed by about fifteen men, who were perfectly naked, their long hair falling below their waists. They went through a variety of rapid and strange evolutions, with a remarkable degree of precision, throwing about their hands and arms, and distorting their bodies, even to their fingers, in a dexterous and almost terrific manner.

Sometimes they would suddenly form a circle, and, with a simultaneous jerk of their heads, throw their long hair, so that the ends would for a moment all meet together in the centre; at other times, rolling their heads upon their shoulders with such astonishing velocity, that the eye was dazzled as they flew round and round, their hair radiating and diverging like the thrumbings of a mop, when trundled by some strong-limbed housemaid. Their motions were regulated by the tom-toms, while an old Brahmin, with a ragged white beard, sat perched over the door of the pagoda, and, with a small piece of bamboo, struck upon the palm of his left hand, as he presided over the whole ceremony. After a few minutes of violent exertion, he gave the signal to stop, and the performers, reeking with perspiration from every pore, bound up their wet hair over their foreheads, and made room for another set, who repeated the same evolutions.

"Is this religion?" inquired Seymour of Macallan, with some astonishment.

"That is a difficult question to answer in a few words. We must hope that it will be acceptable as such, for its votaries are, at least, sincere."

"Oh! no one can deny the *warmth* of their devotion," observed Courtenay, dryly.

The extreme heat and effluvia from the crowds of natives, who witnessed the performance, forced Captain M—— and his companions unwillingly to abandon a scene so novel to an European. At the proposal of their conductor, they agreed to continue their walk to the outskirts of the village.

"I have often been ashore at this village," said the captain, "for they make the small mats here which are much in request at Calcutta, and I have frequent commissions for them. I can show you a novelty, if you wish, but I warn you that it will not be a very agreeable sight. The nullah that runs up here, frequently leaves the dead bodies on the bank. It is now half-ebb, and if you wish to be introduced to vultures and jackals, I can show you plenty. But prepare yourself for a disgusting sight, for these animals do not congregate without a cause."

"To prey on the dead bodies, I presume?" replied Captain M——; "but as I have never seen these animals in their wild state, my curiosity bears down any anticipation of disgust. Let me not, however, influence those who do not feel inclined to encounter it."

"After witnessing that dance," observed Courtenay, taking a pinch of snuff, "I am fully prepared for *any supper*—it is impossible to be more disgusting."

Macallan and Seymour having expressed a wish to proceed, the pilot captain led the way, observing—"These animals are very necessary in the climates to which they are indigenous; they do the duty on shore which the alligators do in the water—that of public scavengers. The number of bodies that are launched into the Ganges is incredible. If a Hindoo is sick, he is brought down to the banks by his relatives, and if he does not recover, is thrown into the river. It is said, indeed, that if they are known to have money, their relatives do not wait till nature tires with her own exertions, but stop their mouths with clay, to prevent the possibility of recovery. There is a strong eddy round this point, and the bodies are swept into the nullah, and lie dry at the ebb."

"What do you call a nullah?" inquired Seymour.

"A nullah means a creek."

"I was so stupidly proud that I did not like to ask; but as Seymour has set the example," added Courtenay, "pray what is a ghaut?"

"A landing-place. See, there are some vultures perched upon that tree," continued the pilot captain, as they ascended the bank of the nullah. As soon as they arrived at the top they perceived, to their horror, seven or eight bodies lying in the mud, surrounded by vultures and jackals, who, indiscriminately mingled together, were devouring them.

As they approached, the jackals retreated, looking repeatedly back, and sometimes facing round to the party, as if to inquire why they disturbed them in their repast. The vultures, on the contrary, did not attempt to move, until Macallan approached to within a few feet, and then those who could retired a few yards, or took their stations on the low branches of a tree close by, where others, who were already satiated, were sitting with drooping wings waiting for a return of appetite to recommence their banquet; others were so gorged, that they could not walk away. With their wings trailing in the mud, and their beaks separated, as if gasping for breath, their brilliant eye dulled from repletion—there they remained, emitting an effluvium so offensive that the numerous skeletons, and the mangled remains of mortality, were pleasing compared to such disgusting specimens of *living* corruption.

The party viewed the scene for a minute or two without speaking, and then turned away by common consent, and did not break silence until they had left it far behind.

"I begin to think," said Courtenay, taking out his box, "that even a savage may occasionally have an excuse for taking snuff. Did you ever, in your whole life, come in contact with such a stench? Positively it has impregnated my snuff. There's a strong twang of the vulture in it," continued he, emptying the contents of the box upon the ground. "Now that's what I consider cursedly annoying."

"We have, indeed, both seen and heard enough for one day," observed Captain M——, as they entered the boat. "Many thanks to you, Mr——, for your attention to our wishes."

"Not at all, Captain M——. I am only sorry that my sights have not been as agreeable as they are novel; but when you arrive at Calcutta, you will find novelty combined with pleasure."

After three days, which appeared to have fled with extra rapidity, from the constant amusement derived from the anecdotes and information imparted by the pilot captain, they sailed up Garden Reach with a fine breeze; and the city of palaces, the only one that deserves its name, burst, in all its splendour, upon their sight.

But I am not about to describe it: reader, do not be alarmed. It is not in my province as a novel writer, and I make it a rule, never to interfere with anybody else, if I can avoid it. Captain Hall, who has already *done* North and South America, and Loo Choo, will, I have no doubt, be here by-and-bye, taking Africa in his way: and as I can make up my three volumes of fiction without trespassing upon his matter of fact, I refer you to his work when it appears, for a description of this gorgeous monument of rapine, this painted sepulchre of crime.

Chapter XLIII

The unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis.

Milton.

Captain M—— remained but a few days at Calcutta, where he perceived little difference between the society and that of England, remarking only, that the gentlemen were more hospitable, and the ladies drank more beer. But I am trespassing, notwithstanding my promise to the contrary, at the end of the last chapter. I will therefore be off at once, before I am decidedly guilty of a breach of faith. The *Aspasia's* orders were to join the admiral, who had quitted the Bay of Bengal, and proceeded to Bombay, to avoid the monsoon, which was about to set in; and as there was no time to be lost, Captain M—— did not touch at Madras, but made all possible haste to gain the tranquil side of the peninsula. The governor-general had requested that he would call at Travancore, to deliver a letter and complimentary present to the reigning queen, who held her possessions tributary to our government.

The *Aspasia* anchored off the town, and was shortly afterwards boarded by one of the ministers of the queen, a venerable Mussulman, who brought a boat-load of compliments and vegetables. He was accompanied by one or two others, among whom was a very indifferent interpreter. Captain M——, who was anxious to join the admiral, excused himself, on the plea of ill-health, from delivering the present and letter in person, and expressed his wish to the deputy that he would take them in charge, stating, that his services were required elsewhere; he requested that an answer to the letter might be sent on board as soon as possible. This was explained through the interpreter, and Captain M—— then inquired what time would probably elapse before the answer would be sent. The reply was, in a week, or ten days.

"Ask him," said Captain M——, impatiently, "whether it cannot be sent to-morrow morning, as I am anxious to proceed?"

After an exchange of several sentences between the interpreter and the deputy, who observed the most imperturbable gravity, the former replied to Captain M——,

"He say no, sar. Little people, like you and me, write letter very quick, all in one minute. Great people, like king and queen, not possible write letter less than week or ten day. Not fashion this country, sar."

The presents being placed in the boat, and the letter presented on a silver salver, the deputy made a low salaam, and departed. Captain M——, aware that all attempts to hasten them would be useless, made no further remarks on the subject. The next morning the same grave personage came on board, attended by the interpreter and his suite, with many compliments from their royal mistress, who had sent a present for the captain. During the time of the delivery and interpretation of the message, the natives, who rowed in his boat, handed up a large black monkey, with a long white beard extending over his chin and shoulders.

The animal, who did not seem well pleased with his change of situation, and who was naturally of a vicious temperament, flew round and round the length of his tether, catching at the trousers of the sailors with his paws and teeth, and using the latter without the least ceremony.

"Queen say, sar—Many compliments, and tell you it very *high caste* monkey—very *high caste*, indeed, sar;—very fine present, sar."

"It may be," observed Captain M—— to the first lieutenant; "but I wish she had saved herself the trouble. I must not refuse it; and what can we do with the brute?"

"It will amuse the men, sir; he seems to have plenty of devil in him."

"Oh!" roared Prose, "I do declare he has bit a piece out of my leg. High caste, indeed. I should like to give him a *high cast* overboard."

"Really, Prose, that's not so bad," observed Seymour. "Jerry was correct in his assertion that you had plenty of wit, only it required strong measures to extract it from you."

"Queen say, sar, write letter in five or six days, and say, suppose captain Saib and officers come on shore, order everybody go hunt tiger. Queen tell people make everything proper. Very fine tiger hunt, sar."

Captain M——, who was convinced that he must patiently await their own time, did not expostulate at the delay. Not wishing to avail himself of the offer, he requested the officers would consider themselves at liberty to accept the invitation, which was intended as a compliment, and therefore ought not to be refused.

A large party was formed, who, on the ensuing day, accompanied by the deputy and his suite, and provided with fowling-pieces and muskets, landed at the town, where they were received by a few tom-toms, and some hundreds of spectators. On their arrival at a house which had been prepared for their reception, they found a splendid breakfast awaiting them, to which they did as ample justice as a celebrated traveller to that which welcomed him at New York, although they did not, like him, revel to satiety, by plunging into oceans of tea and coffee.

Again the talents of the interpreter were called into action, to explain the reason why her majesty could not receive them, which he did by laying his hand across what medical men would term the abdominal region (or, as Mrs Ramsbottom would have said, "her abominable region"), and informing them that the queen was not well there.

The party required no further explanation. They expressed their regrets, finished their breakfast, and then stated themselves ready to proceed.

"Game not come yet, sar—game not come till to-morrow."

"Well, then, we must go to it," replied Courtenay.

"Ah, gentleman not understand shoot in this country," continued the interpreter, who then, with some difficulty, contrived to make them understand that about four thousand men had been summoned to drive the game close to the town, and that, to ensure a sufficiency of sport, the sweep which they had taken was so great, that they would not close in till the next morning. He added, that as, perhaps, they would like to see the jungle to which the game was to be driven, horses and elephants had been prepared, and refreshments would be provided at any spot where they might wish to alight.

Macallan, who had provided himself with his hammers, and other implements requisite in the pursuit of his favourite sciences, mineralogy and geology, was not sorry for the delay, and the remainder of the party were satisfied with the idea of a pleasant excursion. Previous to their setting off, a variety of performers were ordered in to amuse them with feats of juggling and address, which would have been acknowledged, if seen in England, to have far surpassed those of the celebrated Ramoo Samee and his associates. Amongst the rest, the majestic attitudes of the dancing snakes particularly attracted the attention of Macallan, who expressed to the interpreter his wish to procure one of the species (the famed cobra di capella), with the fangs not extracted. The interpreter, after a few words with the deputy, informed the doctor, with his usual politeness, "that all the snakes in the country were at the service of the gentleman; but take care not let bite, because very high caste snake."

"What do they mean by calling the animals of the country high caste?" inquired Seymour of Macallan. "I thought it was a term only applied to the Brachmins and Rajahpouts."

"Both the monkey and the snake are indirectly worshipped by these people," replied the doctor, "as their supposed deities are represented to have assumed these forms. The more vicious, or the more venomous, the higher they rank. The cobra di capella is, I believe, the most venomous serpent that exists."

"I do declare that that monkey deserves his rank," observed Prose. "I can hardly walk, as it is."

"Well, but you can ride, Prose, and here are the horses."

The horses, with three elephants, two with howdahs on their backs, and the other loaded with a large tent, were now paraded before the door; each horse was attended by his syce, or groom, who never quitted him, but fanned away the flies with a chowry, or whisk, formed of a horse's tail. They were beautiful animals, but much too spirited for some of the party, who felt alarm at the very anticipation of the difficulty they would have in retaining their seats.

Prose, who had never been twice in his life on the back of any animal, was in sad trepidation; he looked first at the horses, who were plunging and rearing, in the hands of the syces, who could with difficulty restrain their impatience, and then at the elephants, whose stupendous size, flourishing probosces, projecting tusks, and small, keen eyes, equally filled him with dismay.

"I do declare," observed Prose, affecting an extra limp, "my leg is very bad. I think——"

"Come, come, Mr Prose, no hauling off; no leg-bail, if you please," said Courtenay, who, with Seymour, was already mounted upon a spirited Arabian; "take your choice—but go you must."

"Well, then, if I must, which would you advise me to take?"

"Take a horse," said Seymour, laughing; "of two evils always choose the least."

"Take an elephant, Mr Prose," cried Courtenay; "his size is double, but he'll give you less trouble."

"Why, that's a rhyme, I do declare; but how shall I get upon his back?"

"Oh! he'll take you up in his trunk, and put you on."

"Indeed he shall not," cried Prose, retreating some paces; "I say, Mr Interpreter, how am I to get on the top of that great beast?"

"As you please, sar. Suppose you like get up before, he lift up his leg for you to climb up. Suppose you like to get up behind, he not say nothing. Suppose you wish go up his middle, you ab ladder."

"Well, then, Mr Interpreter, I shall feel very much obliged to you for a ladder."

A ladder was brought. Prose, and Macallan, with his implements, ascended to the howdah fixed on the back of the enormous brute. The remainder of the party being ready, they set off, accompanied by the deputy, the interpreter, and several other handsomely attired natives, who, out of compliment to the officers, had been ordered to attend them.

The country, like most parts of India near to the coast, consisted of paddy or rice fields, under water, diversified with intersecting patches of jungle and high trees. Occasionally they passed a deeper pool, where the buffaloes, with only their horns and tips of their noses to be seen, lay, with the whole of their enormous carcasses hid under the muddy water, to defend themselves from the attacks of the mosquitoes, and the powerful rays of the sun.

"Look at the buffaloes, Prose."

"Where, Seymour? I can't see any. I never saw a buffalo in my life. It's like an ox, an't it?"

"It's very like a whale," replied Courtenay.

At this moment one of the herd, startled at the near approach of the cavalcade, rose from the stagnant pool, where he had been lying, and presented his immense carcass, covered with mud, to Prose's wondering eyes.

"Lord, Molly, what a fish!" exclaimed Courtenay, with affected surprise, alluding to an old standing naval joke.

"Now, is that a fish?" cried Prose, a little alarmed. "Well, I do declare! I say, Mr Interpreter, what is that thing?"

"Call him buffalo, sar."

"Well, I do declare; I always thought that buffaloes were animals that lived on shore."

"Nothing like travelling, Mr Prose," observed Courtenay; "you'll know a buffalo, now, if ever you happen to hook one, when you are fishing out of the fore-chains."

"And you'll remember a high-caste monkey, if ever you meet with one again," added Seymour.

"That I shall, all the days of my life."

The country, as they proceeded inland, materially altered its features. The ascent was constant, although gentle. Forests of large trees and fragments of rocks met their view, instead of the paddy fields, which they had left behind; and Macallan now wished to descend, that he might collect geological specimens. Explaining his reasons, he desired the interpreter to order the elephant to stop.

"Suppose gentleman want stones, elephant give them," replied the interpreter; "no occasion for Saib to get off:" and explaining the doctor's wishes to the conductor of the elephant, the knowledge of which occasioned a laugh among the natives, who could not conceive why the doctor should want the stones, he continued, "Now, sar, you point any stone you want."

The doctor did so; and the conductor, speaking to the elephant, the proboscis of the sagacious animal immediately handed up the one pointed out to his conductor, who passed it to Macallan.

For more than an hour the doctor amused himself with breaking and examining the different specimens presented to him, until he passed by an isolated mass, whose component parts, glittering in the sun, made him anxious to obtain a specimen. It was a large rock, about the size of six elephants, and the doctor pointed to it.

"Ah, sar!" interrupted the interpreter: "elephant very strong beast, but no lift that."

"I did not imagine that he would, but I must dismount to examine it," replied Macallan, gravely, who was absorbed in his scientific pursuits.

The elephant stopped; and the doctor, not aware of the great height, attempted to slip down his side; he succeeded in reaching the ground, not exactly on his feet, to the great amusement of the party. Regardless of trifles when in pursuit of science, he desired Prose to throw him down his bag of implements, and proceeded to the object of his investigation, which appeared to him so peculiar, that he requested the others to continue their excursion, and leave him to be picked up on their return.

"Ah, massa! like stop this place?" said the interpreter.

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"Do you really intend to remain here?" inquired Courtenay.

"I do: it is a very remarkable specimen of cinnamon stone, and I must procure some of it if possible."

"Well, I do declare," said Prose: "I thought cinnamon grew upon trees. Doctor, I should like to stay with you, for this beast does shake me so, I'm quite sore—and I've such a stitch in my side."

Prose accordingly prepared to descend, and was recommended by the interpreter to slide down by the hind leg of the animal.

"He won't kick, will he?"

"Elephant no kick, sar," and Prose descended in safety, and joined the doctor, while the remainder of the party continued their excursion.

The doctor walked several times round the rock, to find a point upon which he would be able to make some impression with his implements; but the fragment, which had probably remained there since the deluge, without having been honoured by a visit from a naturalist, was worn quite smooth by time, and presented no acute angle, within reach, upon which his hammer could make any impression; nor could he climb it, for it rose from its base in almost a perpendicular line. The more he scrutinised, the more anxious was he to obtain specimens, and he determined to blast the rock. Being prepared with a couple of short crowbars, and a flask of gunpowder, he fixed upon a corner, which appeared more assailable than the rest, and commenced his laborious occupation.

"Can I assist you, Mr Macallan?" inquired Prose.

"You can, indeed, Mr Prose. Now, observe; continue driving the end of the crowbar straight into this hole until you have made it about nine or ten inches deep; that will be sufficient. I will make another on the other side."

Prose commenced his labour, and, for a few minutes, worked with due emphasis; but he soon found out that he had volunteered to a most fatiguing task. He stopped, at last, for want of breath.

"Well, Mr Prose," inquired the doctor, from the other side of the rock, observing that he had ceased from his labour, "how do you get on?"

"I wish to Heaven I had never got off," muttered Prose, "for this is worse than the elephant."

But the doctor was an enthusiast, a description of person who never tires, and he judged of others by himself.

"How far have you got now, Mr Prose?"

"Oh—I think I have got an inch and a half good," answered Prose, quite exhausted.

"No more!" exclaimed Macallan; "why, you must work harder, or we never shall blast it."

"I have been *blasting* it in my heart," thought Prose, "for these last ten minutes," and he resumed his labour.

"You know nothing of mineralogy?" inquired the doctor, after a silence of a few minutes.

"This is my first lesson, doctor," answered Prose, out loud; and muttering in continuation, "I do declare it shall be the last."

"It's a very amusing study," continued Macallan; "but, like most others, rather dry at first."

"Anything but dry," thought Prose, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

"I shall be happy to give you any information in my power," said Macallan; "but you must be attentive—nothing is to be obtained without labour."

"I'm sure mineralogy is not," retorted Prose, throwing down his crowbar from exhaustion.

Fortunately for Prose, by the directions of the interpreter, the baggage elephant who carried the tent, and the natives accompanying it, now halted opposite to the rock, on the side where Prose was, for the wish expressed by Macallan to remain there had been construed by the interpreter as a selection of the place where the refreshments should be prepared. One of the natives, perceiving what Prose was about when he threw away the crowbar, offered his assistance, which was readily accepted, and the labour was continued.

"Well, Mr Prose, how do you get on now?"

"Oh!—capitally."

"Don't you find it very warm?" continued Macallan, who stopped to wipe the streams of perspiration from his own face.

"Oh no," answered Prose, chuckling.

"Well, I do, I can assure you," answered the doctor, who, not wishing to show symptoms of flagging, while Prose was working so hard, recommenced his labour.

Another quarter of an hour, and the doctor was quite exhausted; wishing for an excuse to leave off himself, he called again to Prose—

"An't you tired, Mr Prose?"

"Not the least, doctor."

"Oh, but you must be—you had better rest yourself a little."

"Thank you, but I'm not the least tired."

Another five minutes.—"Well, Mr Prose, I really give you great credit for you perseverance. Let me see how deep you are," said Macallan, who could find no other excuse for being the first to abandon his task.

But Prose, who was not exactly a fool, determined not to lose his credit with the doctor—pushing aside the native, he took the crowbar from him, and before the doctor had walked round, was again hard at work.

"Upon my honour I give you great credit," observed the panting Macallan, as he witnessed the effects of the labour.

"But," observed Prose, "why should we work this way when there are a parcel of black fellows doing nothing? Here, I say, you chap, come and punch here," continued he, pointing the crowbar to the native, who immediately resumed his labour. "You call another, Mr Macallan, and make him work for you."

"Well thought of, Mr Prose," answered the doctor, and another native being put in requisition, in less than an hour the rock was perforated to the depth required, without the least appearance of fatigue, or even heat upon the skins of the temperate Hindoos. In the meantime the tent was erected, the mats and carpets spread, the fires lighted, and the repast preparing by the cooks who were in attendance. The doctor, who was absorbed in his views, heeded it not, and had just finished the charging and priming of the rock when the cavalcade returned from their excursion.

"Well, doctor, how do you get on?" inquired Courtenay.

"Oh, I'm all ready, and you had better remove to a little distance, as I'm about to fire my trains."

"Fire your trains! — Why, what have you been about?"

"I am going to blast the rock."

"The devil you are—then I'm off," cried Courtenay, who, with Seymour, retreated from the well-known effects of gunpowder.

The natives who accompanied them also retired, although not aware of the nature of the operation. The interpreter understood "gentlemen make fireworks," and reported accordingly.

The doctor lighted his matches and withdrew, followed by Prose, who forgot his limp upon this occasion. The mines exploded, splitting large fragments from the rock, and shaking it from its base.

"Capital!" exclaimed the doctor, who, as soon as the smoke had cleared away, ran up, and was in ecstasies at the variety and brilliancy of the specimens which were now exposed to his eager view.

But in his enthusiasm the doctor quite overlooked the mischief which he had occasioned. One large fragment had struck the tent to the ground; others had scattered the cooking utensils, with their contents, and wounded the unfortunate cooks; while the affrighted elephant had completed the demolition by trotting over the whole, his trunk raised high in the air, uttering shrill cries, and regardless of the admonitions of his conductor. All was confusion and dismay.

The natives when they witnessed the damage were astonished. A long consultation took place between them, as to what the doctor meant; at last it was decided by the grave deputy that it was intended as a compliment to them—for all fireworks were compliments in that country. They therefore salaamed with great good humour: but the English knew better, and commenced a violent attack upon Macallan, who was still absorbed in collecting specimens, and quite unconscious of the mischief which he had created.

"You've not only destroyed our dinner," continued Courtenay, "but you've killed three cooks, and wounded seven more."

"Is it possible!" cried Macallan, with dismay, throwing away his specimens with as much haste as he had seized upon them, and running in the direction of the men reported to be hurt. Fortunately for his peace of mind, Courtenay's list of killed was all invention, and the wounded were reduced to *two* which the doctor conscientiously reported under the head of "*slightly*."

There was no help but to proceed to town, and wait until another repast could be provided. This was soon done, and the interpreter, with a double salaam, informed the doctor, that "if gentleman wish blow up another tent deputy have one ready for him next day."

"Well, now, I do declare these people are very polite," observed Prose; "but I hope that if you do, doctor, you will not make me a party to it. I would never have punched so hard at that hole if I thought that it was to have blown up my own dinner."

"You're right, Mr Prose," answered Courtenay. "The doctor did not treat us according to the Scriptures. We asked for bread, and he gave us a stone—rather annoying too, after a long ride. But, however, as the game is to come to us to-morrow, we had better be up early to receive it in due form—so good-night."

Chapter XLIV

Now shall ye see
Our Roman hunting.
SHAKESPEARE.

Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, ev'ry region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder!
SHAKESPEARE.

AT an early hour, Courtenay and his companions started with their attendants for the scene of action. Several elephants, as well as horses, had been provided, that the officers might mount them when they arrived, and fire from their backs with more deliberate aim. In less than two hours they reached the spot which they had surveyed the day before. The game, which had been driven from jungle to jungle for many miles round, was now collected together in one large mass of underwood and low trees, three sides of which were surrounded by the natives, who had been employed in the service, and who had been joined by many hundreds from the town and neighbouring villages. As soon as the party arrived, those who were on horseback dismounted, took their stations upon the howdahs of the elephants, and collected at the corner of that side of the jungle at which the animals were to be driven out. The scene was one of the most animating and novel description. Forty or fifty of the superior classes of natives, mounted upon fiery Arabians, with their long glittering boar-spears in their hands, and above one hundred on foot, armed with muskets, surrounded the elephants upon which the officers were stationed. The people who were waiting round the jungle, silent themselves, and busy in checking the noise and impatience of the dogs held in leashes, whose deep baying was occasionally answered by a low growl from the outskirts of the wood, now received the order to advance. Shouts and yells, mixed with the barking of the dogs, were raised in deafening clamour on every side. The jungle, which covered a space of fifteen or twenty acres, and which had hitherto appeared but slightly tenanted, answered as if endued with life, by waving its boughs and rustling its bushes in every direction, although there was nothing to be seen.

As they advanced, beating with their long poles, and preserving a straight and compact line, through which nothing could escape, so did the jungle before them increase its motion; and soon the yells of thousands of men were answered by the roars and cries of thousands of brute animals. It was not, however, until the game had been driven so near to the end of the jungle at which the hunters were stationed, and until they were huddled together so close that it could no longer contain them, that they unwillingly abandoned it. The most timorous, the rabbit and the hare, and all the smaller tribes, first broke cover, and were allowed to pass unnoticed; but they were soon followed by the whole mass, who, as if by agreement among themselves, had determined at once to decide their fate.

Crowded in incongruous heaps, without any distinction of species or of habits, now poured out the various denizens of the woods—deer in every variety, locking their horns in their wild confusion; the fierce wild-boars, bristling in their rage; the bounding leopards; the swift antelope, of every species; the savage panthers; jackals, and foxes, and all the screaming and shrieking infinities of the monkey tribe. Occasionally, amongst the dense mass could be perceived the huge boa-constrictor, rolling in convolutions—now looking back with fiery eyes upon his pursuers, now precipitating his flight—while the air was thronged with its winged tenants, wildly screaming, and occasionally dropping down dead with fear. To crown the whole, high in the expanse, a multitude of vultures appeared, almost stationary on the wing, waiting for their share of the anticipated slaughter. And as the beasts threw down and rolled over each other in their mad career—the preyer and the preyed upon, the powerful and the weak, the rapacious and the harmless, the destroyer and his victims—you might have fancied, from the universal terror which prevailed, that it was a day of judgment to which the inhabitants had been summoned.

It was not a day of mercy. The slaughter commenced; shot after shot laid them in the dust, while the natives, on their Arabians, charged with their spears into the thickest of the crowd, regardless of the risk which they encountered from the muskets of other parties. The baying of the large dogs, who tore down their victims, the din occasionally increased by the contention and growls of the assailed, the yells of the natives, and the shrill cries of the elephants, raised, in obedience to their conductors, to keep the more ferocious animals at a distance, formed a scene to which no pen can do justice. In a few minutes all was over; those who had escaped were once more hid, panting, in the neighbouring jungles, while those who had fallen covered the ground, in every direction, and in every variety.

"Very fine tiger hunt, sir," observed the interpreter to Courtenay, with exultation.

"Very fine, indeed: Seymour, this is something like a battue. What would some of your English sportsmen have given to have been here? But, interpreter, I don't see any tigers."

"Great tigers? No, sar, no great tiger in this country. Call dis tiger?" said the man, pointing with his finger to a prostrate leopard.

Such is the case—the regal Bengal tiger, as well as his rival the lion, admits of no copartnership in his demesnes. On the banks of the impetuous rivers of India, he ranges alone, the jungles which supply his wants, and permits them not to be poached by inferior sportsmen. Basking his length in the sun, and playing about his graceful tail, he prohibits the intrusion of the panther or the leopard. His majestic compeer seems to have entered into an agreement with him, that they shall not interfere with each other's manorial rights, and where you find the royal tiger, you need not dread the presence of the lion. Each has established his dominion, where it has pleased him, both respecting each other, and leaving the rest of the world to be preyed upon by their inferiors.

"Well, Prose, how many did you kill?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, Seymour, I never fired my musket. I was so astonished and so frightened that I could not: I never believed that there were so many beasts in the whole universe."

"I am convinced," observed Macallan, "that I saw an animal hitherto undescribed—I fired at it, but an antelope bounded by as I pulled my trigger, and received the ball —I never regretted anything so much in my life. Did you see it?"

"I saw a number of most undescribable animals?" replied Courtenay; "but let us descend, and walk over the field of slaughter."

The party dismounted, and for some time amused themselves with examining the variety of the slain. The deer and antelopes were the most plentiful; but, on enumeration, nine panthers and leopards, and fifteen wild-boars, headed the list. Prose and Seymour were walking side by side, when they perceived a monkey sitting on the ground, with a most pitiful face; it was of a small variety, with a long tail; it made no effort to escape as they approached it, but on the contrary appeared to court their notice, by looking at them with a melancholy air, and uttering loud cries, as if in pain.

"Poor little fellow," said Seymour, apostrophising the animal, "it looks as if it were a rational being.—Where are you hurt?"

The monkey, as if it were a rational being, looked down at one of his hind legs, and put his finger into the wound where the ball had entered.

"Well now, I do declare," said Prose, "but the poor beast understands you."

Seymour examined the leg without any resistance on the part of the monkey, who continued to look first at the wound, and then in their faces, as if to say, "Why did you do it?"

"Macallan, come here," ejaculated Seymour, "and see if you can assist this poor little fellow."

Macallan came up, and examined the wound.—"I think it will recover; the bone is not broken, and no vital part is touched. We'll bandage it up, and take him home."

"How very like a human being it is," observed Courtenay; "it appears only to want speech—it's really excessively annoying."

"Rather mortifying to our pride, I grant," replied Macallan.

"That's exactly what I mean."

Seymour tore up his handkerchief for bandages, and the monkey was consigned to the care of a native.—(*Par parenthèse*, it eventually recovered; and from the peculiarity of its history, and the request of Seymour, was allowed by Captain M—— to remain on board of the frigate, where it became a great favourite. HIGH CASTE, on the contrary, disappeared a few days after his reception, having been thrown overboard by some of the people that he had bitten, and Captain M—— made no inquiries after him. So much for the two monkeys.)

By this time the natives had collected the game, which was carried in procession before the officers. The leopards and panthers, which they skinned and rudely stuffed with grass, in an incredibly short time, leading the procession, followed by the wild-boars, deer, and antelopes, each carried between two men, slung under bamboos, which rested on their shoulders. The procession having passed in review before them, continued its course to the town, followed by crowds of people who had come out to join the sport.

"Gentlemen, like dine here?" inquired the interpreter —"soon make dinner ready, but no ab tent."

"Thanks to *you*, doctor, they won't trust us with another. I vote we dine here; for I am hungry enough to eat a buffalo, without anchovy sauce—eh, Mr Prose? Let us dine under yon acacia, on the little mount. There is a fine breeze blowing, and plenty of shade from the tree."

Courtenay's proposal was agreed to, and the interpreter gave the directions. He then told the doctor, that if Saib wished to see snake man, he come now, and bring very fine snake.

The man made his appearance, holding in his hand a small earthen chatty, or pot, in which he had confined the snake, covered over with a linen rag. He exchanged a few sentences with the interpreter, who explained that "man not afraid of bite of snake, and if gentleman give him rupee, he let snake bite him—man eat herb, same as little beast that kill snake."

"Oh, that plant that the ichneumon resorts to when bitten," exclaimed Macallan. "This will be a most curious fact, and I must witness it. Interpreter, tell him that I will reward him handsomely."

"How does he catch the snakes?" inquired Seymour.

"Blow little pipe, sar," replied the interpreter, pointing to a small reed, perforated with five or six holes, suspended by a string to the man's neck; "snake like music."

He then proceeded to explain the manner of taking the snakes, which was effected by lying down close to the hole where the snake was, and by playing a few soft notes with the pipe. The snake, attracted by the sound, puts his head out of the hole, and is immediately firmly grasped by the neck, by which he is held until his fangs are extracted, by jerking them out with a piece of rag, held for him to bite at.

"Strange," observed Courtenay, "that snakes should be fond of music, and still stranger that people should have discovered it."

"And yet it has long been known—perhaps, from time immemorial," answered Macallan. "The comparisons of Scripture are all derived from eastern scenery and eastern customs. Do you not recollect the words of the psalmist, who compareth the wicked to the deaf adder, who, 'will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely?'"

"I recollect it now," answered Courtenay; "from which I infer, that as snakes are not caught for nothing, they danced before king Solomon."

"Perhaps they did, or at least in his time."

The man carefully removed the cloth from the top of the chatty, and watching his opportunity, seized the snake by the neck, who immediately wound itself round his arm. Holding it in that position, he rapidly chewed leaves which he had wrapped in the cloth which encircled his loins. After having laid a heap of the masticated leaves near him, he swallowed a large quantity, and then applied the head of the snake to his left ear, which the animal immediately bit so as to draw blood. It was a cobra di capella of the largest size, being nearly six feet long. As soon as the snake had bitten him, he replaced it in the chatty, and at the same time that he continued to swallow the leaves, rubbed the wounded part with some of the heap which he had masticated, and laid down beside him.

There was a silence, and a degree of painful anxiety, on the part of the spectators, during the process. The man appeared to be sick and giddy, and laid down, but gradually recovered, and making a low salaam, received his largess, handed the snake, in the chatty, to Macallan, and departed.

"A most curious fact—an excessively curious fact," observed the doctor, putting up his tablets, and a handful of the leaves, which he had taken the precaution to obtain.

"Now, gentlemen, dinner all ready," observed the interpreter.

The dinner had been spread out on the little mount, pointed out by Courtenay. It rose, isolated from the plain, to the height of about thirty feet, with a steep and regular ascent on every side. The summit was flat, and in the centre the acacia waved its graceful and pendant flowers to the breeze, each moment altering the position of the bright spot of sunshine, which pierced through its branches, and reflected on the grass beneath. The party (consisting of the officers of the ship, the grave deputy, and his immediate suite, about fifteen in number), whose appetites were keen from their morning exercise and excitement, gladly hailed the summons, and seating themselves in a circle round the viands, which were spread under the tree, crossed their legs, after the Mahomedan custom, and made a furious attack upon the provender.

Macallan, to secure his newly-acquired treasure, hung the chatty, by its string, upon one of the long thorns of the acacia, and then took his seat with the rest. Ample justice having been done to what had been placed before them, mirth and good-humour prevailed. Courtenay had just persuaded the grave old deputy to break through the precepts of his religion, and partake of the forbidden cup, in the shape of a tumbler of madeira, when the chatty, which the doctor had suspended aloft, by the constant waving of the tree to the wind, worked off the thorn, and falling down in the very centre of the circle, smashed into atoms, and the cobra di capella met their gaze, reared upon the very tip of his tail, his hood expanded to the utmost in his wrath, hissing horribly, and darting out his forked tongue—wavering, among the many, upon whom first to dart.

Never was a convivial party so suddenly dispersed. For one, and but one moment, they were all paralysed ; no one attempted to get up and run away—then, as if by a simultaneous thought, they all threw themselves back, tossing their heels over their heads, and continuing their eccentric career. Mussulmans and Europeans all tumbled backwards, heels over heads, down the descent, diverging in every point of the compass, until they reached their respective situations at the bottom of the mount : while the cobra di capella still remained in his menacing attitude, as if satisfied with the universal homage paid to his dreadful powers.

They all recovered their legs (as they had gained the bottom of the hill) about the same time. Courtenay and Seymour, now that the danger was over, were convulsed with laughter—Macallan in amazement—Prose, with his eyes starting out of his head, uttering his usual "I do declare"—the deputy as grave as ever—and the remainder, fortunately, more frightened than they were hurt.

One of the native servants put an end to the scene, by re-ascending the hill with a long bamboo, with which he struck the animal to the ground, and subsequently dispatched him. By this time all had recovered from their alarm, and in a few minutes their seats were resumed. The doctor, who was vexed at the loss of his snake, commenced an examination of the body, and was still more mortified to find that the wily Hindoo had deceived him, the venomous fangs having been already extracted.

"It is positively a fact," observed he, to Courtenay, in ill-humour, "he has cheated me."

"A most curious fact," replied Courtenay, shrugging up his shoulders, and lowering the corners of his mouth. "Now, Macallan, what's the use of your memoranda about time of biting, appearance of patient, etc.? Allow, for once, that there are some things which are 'excessively annoying.'"

The party soon after remounted, and proceeded to the town. The next morning they repaired on board, and the queen having, at last, concocted the letter of thanks, the *Aspasia* weighed, and proceeded to Bombay.

Chapter XLV

An you like a *ready* knave, here is one of most approved convenience: he will cheat you moreover to your heart's content. If you believe me not, try him.

The Colony, 1635.

The *Aspasia* continued her passage with light but favourable winds. As the ship made but little progress, Captain M—— stood into Goa Bay, as he passed by that relic of former grandeur and prosperity—alas! like the people who raised it, how fallen from its "high estate." The town still covers the same vast extent of ground; the churches still rear their heads above the other buildings in their beautiful proportions; the Palace of the Inquisition still lowers upon you in its fanatical gloom, and massive iron bars. But where is the wealth, the genius, the enterprise, the courage, and religious enthusiasm which raised these majestic piles? A scanty population, of mixed Hindoo and Portuguese blood, or of half-converted Indians, are the sole occupiers of this once splendid city of the east. Read the history of the Moors when in Spain, their chivalry, and their courage, their learning and advancement in the arts,—and now view their degraded posterity on the African coast. Reflect upon the energy and perseverance of the Spaniards, at the time when they drove out those conquerors of their country after a struggle of so many years—their subsequent discovery and possession of a western world—and behold them now. Turn to the Portuguese, who, setting an example of perseverance and activity to the nations of Europe, in vessels in which we should now think it almost insanity to make the attempt, forced their passage round the Stormy Cape, undeterred by disasters or by death, and grasped the empire of the east. What are they in the scale of nations now?

How rapid these transitions! Two hundred years have scarcely rolled away—other nations, with the fabrics they have raised, have been precipitated to the dust; but they have departed, full of years, and men and things have run their race together. But here, the last in all their splendour, while the energies of the former have decayed, remains; and where have we a more melancholy picture of humanity, either in an individual or in a nation, than when we survey the body that has outlived the mind?

Since the world began, history is but the narrative of kingdoms and states progressing to maturity or decay. Man himself is but an epitome of the nations of men. In youth, all energy; in prime of life, all enterprise and vigour; in senility, all weakness and second childhood. Then, England, learn thy fate from the unerring page of time. Sooner or later, it shall arrive that thou shalt be tributary to some nation, hitherto, I trust, unborn; and thy degenerate sons shall read that liberty was once the watchword of the isle, and yet not even feel a longing to be free.

As the *Aspasia* lay nearly becalmed at the entrance of the harbour, a small boat, rowed by two men, pulled towards her, and the occupant of the stern-sheets, as he came alongside, stated, in bad English, that he brought "present for captain," and was allowed to come up the side by the first lieutenant, who was on deck. He was a native friar, and disgusting as the dress is, when worn by an European in a northern clime, it appeared still more so, enveloping a black under the torrid zone. He carried a little covered basket in his hand, and stated that he had been sent by the superior of the convent, which he pointed to, on the headland at the mouth of the harbour. The first lieutenant went down into the cabin, and reported to the captain.

"A present!" observed Captain M——; "I hope it is not a monkey—'*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*'"

The first lieutenant, who had forgotten his Latin, made no answer, but returned on deck, where he was shortly after followed by Captain M——.

The sable votary of St Francis made his bow, and opening the lid of his basket, pulled out a cabbage with a long stalk and four or five flagging leaves, but no heart to it. "Superior send present to Inglez capitown." And having laid it carefully on the carronade slide, fumbled in his pocket for some time, and eventually produced a dirty sheet of paper, on which, written in execrable English, was a petition to assist the wants of the convent.

"I expected as much," observed Captain M——, smiling, as he ran over the ridiculous wording of the petition. "Desire the purser's steward to get up a bag of biscuit, and put it into the boat."

The bread was handed on the gangway, when the friar, observing it, went up to the captain, and said, "Superior like rum, sar; suppose you no rum, teng like money."

"Perhaps he may," replied Captain M——; "but it is against my rules to give the first, and, if I recollect right, against those of your order to receive the second."

Finding that nothing more was to be obtained, the friar was about to depart, when, perceiving the cabbage lying unnoticed where he had deposited it, he observed—"Capitown, non quer cabbage—not want?"

"Not particularly," replied Captain M——, surveying it with rather a contemptuous smile.

"Then take it ashore, plant it again—do for 'nother ship;" and he replaced the present in his basket, made his bow, and departed.

Reader, cabbages are scarce articles in India. I have seen them at Pondicherry, growing in flower-pots, as curious exotics.

Two days afterwards, the *Aspasia* came to an anchor at Bombay, and having saluted the admiral, Captain M—— went on shore to pay his respects in person. The ship was soon crowded with a variety of people, who came off to solicit the washing, etc., of the officers. The gun-room officers had just finished their dinner, and the cloth had been removed, when our friend Billy Pitts entered, introducing a slim personage, attired in a robe of spotless white, with the dark turban, peculiar to the Parsees, and bringing in his hand a small basket of fruit.

"Massa Courtenay, here mulatta fellow want speak to officers. Call himself Dubash—look in dictionary, and no such word in English language."

"It means a washerman, I suppose," observed Price.

"No, sir," answered the man for himself, with a graceful bow, "not a washerman, but at same time get all your clothes washed. Dubash go to market, supply gentlemen with everything they want—run everywhere for them—bring off meat and fish, and everything else—everybody have dubash here—I dubash to all the ships come here—got very good certificate, sir," continued the Parsee, drawing a thin book from his vest, and presenting it to Courtenay with a low bow.

"Well, Mr Dubash, let us see what your character may be," said Courtenay, opening the book.

"Yes, sir, you please to read them, and I go speak to young gentlemen, before other dubash come on board; I bring gentlemen little fruit," and laying the basket respectfully on the table, with another low salaam, the man quitted the gun-room.

Courtenay read for a minute, and then burst into a fit of laughter.

"Very good certificates, indeed," observed he, "only hear—

"'1st.—This is to certify, that Hommajee Baba served the gun-room mess of his Majesty's ship *Flora*, and cheated us most damnably.

(Signed) "'Peter Hicks, 1st Lieut.
"'Jonas Smith, Purser.'

"'2nd.—Hommajee Baba served me as dubash during my stay in this port. He is a useful fellow, but a great scoundrel. I gave him one-half of his bill, and he was perfectly satisfied. I recommend others to do the same.

(Signed) "'Andrew Thompson,
Company's ship *Clio*.'

"'3rd.—I perfectly agree with the above remarks; but as all the other dubashes are as great thieves, and not half so intelligent, I conscientiously recommend Hommajee Baba.

(Signed) "'Peter Phillips.
Captain Honbl. Company's cruiser, *Vestal*.'

"'4th.—Of all the scoundrels that I ever had to deal with, in this most rascally quarter of a most knavish world, Hommajee Baba is the greatest. Never give him any money, as he will find it; but when you go away, pay him one-third of his bill, and you will still have paid him too much.

(Signed) "'Billy Helflame,
Captain H.M.S. *Spitfire*.'"

About a dozen pages of the book were filled with certificates to the above effect, which the dubash, although he spoke English fluently, not being able to read, considered, as he had been informed at the time, to be decidedly in his favour. They were so far valuable, that they put newcomers upon their guard, and prevented much extortion on the part of the said Hommajee.

When the laughter had to a degree subsided, Billy Pitts was the first to exclaim—"D—n black villain—I tink so, when he come to me; not like cut of um jib——"

"'Who steals my purse, steals trash,'" spouted Price.

"Cause you never have money, Mr Price," cried Billy, interrupting him.

"Silence, sir,—'But he who filches from me my good name, robs me of that—of that'——"

"Rob you of what, sar?"

"Silence, sir," again cried Price—"'robs me of that—' what is it?—that d—d black thief has put it out of my head—"

"I not the thief, sar—Massa Price, you always forget end of your story."

"I'll make an end of you directly, sir, if you're not off."

"No! don't kill Billy," observed Courtenay; "it's bad enough to have murdered Shakespeare. Well, but now, it's my opinion, that we ought to employ this fellow—and take the advice that has been given to us in this book."

Courtenay's proposal was assented to, and on his return, Hommajee Baba was installed in office.

The next morning, Seymour, Courtenay, and Macallan went on shore to meet an old acquaintance of the latter, who had called upon him on his arrival. By his advice, they left the ship before the sun had risen, that they might be enabled to walk about, and view the town and its environs, without being incommoded by the heat. They reached the long plain close to the sea, upon which the admiral and many others, according to the custom of the English inhabitants, were residing, in capacious tents; not such tents as have been seen in England, but impervious to the heat and rain, covering a large extent of ground, divided into several apartments, and furnished like any other residence. The broad expanse of ocean, which met their view, was unruffled, and the beach was lined with hundreds, standing on their carpets, spread upon the sand, with their faces turned toward the east. As the sun rose in splendour above the horizon, they all prostrated themselves in mute adoration, and continued in that position until his disk had cleared the water's edge — they then rose, and throwing a few flowers into the rippling wave, folded up their carpets and departed.

"Who are those people, and of what religion?" demanded Seymour.

"They are Parsees, a remnant of the ancient Persians—the Guebres, or worshippers of fire. As you have witnessed, they also adore the sun. They came here long since to enjoy their tenets, free from persecution. They are the most intelligent race that we have. Many of them were princes in their own country, and are now men of unbounded wealth. They have their temples here, in which the sacred fire is never permitted to go out. If, by any chance or negligence, it should become extinct, it must be relighted from heaven alone. We have no lightning here, and they send to Calcutta, where there is plenty at the change of the monsoon, and bring it round with great ceremony."

"In other points, are their customs different from the Hindoos?"

"Yes; their women are not so immured: you will meet plenty of them when you return to town. They are easily distinguished by their fair complexions, and the large thin gold rings, with three or four pearls strung upon them, worn in a hole perforated through the nostrils, and hanging below their mouths."

"And what are those immense towers on the other side of the bay?"

"They were built by the Parsees, as depositories for the dead; on the summit is a wide iron grating, upon which the bodies are laid, to be devoured by the birds of prey; when stripped the bones fall through the iron bars into the receptacle below. They never bury their dead.—But breakfast must be ready, so we had better return. You have much to see here. The caves of Elephanta and Canara are well worthy of your attention—and I shall be happy to attend you, when you feel inclined to pay a visit to them."

They did not fail to profit by the offer, and before the week had passed away, they had witnessed those splendid monuments of superstition and idolatry. The *Aspasia* received her orders, and Hommajee Baba, being paid the due proportion of his bill, received his certificate from

Courtenay, in the usual form, and so far from being affronted, requested the honour of being again employed in their services, if ever they should return to Bombay.

Chapter XLVI

These are not foes
With whom it would be safe to strive in honour.
They will repay your magnanimity,
Assassin-like, with secret stabs.
Anon.

The strength of the monsoon had blown over, and Captain M——, in pursuance of his orders, beat across the Bay of Bengal, for the Straits of Sumatra, where he expected to fall in with some of the enemy's privateers, who obtained their supplies of water in that direction. After cruising for six weeks, without success, they fell in with an armed English vessel, who informed them that she had been chased by a large pirate proa, and had narrowly escaped—acquainting Captain M—— with the islet from which she had sallied out in pursuit of them, and to which she had in all probability returned.

Captain M——, naturally anxious to scour the seas of these cruel marauders, who showed no quarter to those who had the misfortune to fall into their hands, determined to proceed in quest of this vessel, and after a week's unsuccessful reconnoitre of the various islets which cover the seas in that quarter, one morning discovered her from the mast-head, on his weather beam, sailing and rowing down towards the frigate, to ascertain whether she was a vessel that she might venture to attack.

The *Aspasia* was disguised as much as possible, and the pirates were induced to approach within a distance of two miles, when, perceiving their mistake, they lowered their sails, and turning the head of their vessel in the opposite direction, pulled away from the frigate, right in the wind's eye The breeze freshened, and all possible sail was crowded on the *Aspasia*, to overtake them, and although, at the close of the day, they had not neared her much, the bright moon enabled them to keep the vessel in view during the night. Early in the morning (the crew being probably exhausted from their incessant labour), she kept away for some islets broad upon the *Aspasia's* weather bow, and came to an anchor in a small cove between the rocks, which sheltered her from the guns of the frigate.

Captain M—— considered it his duty at all risk to destroy the proa; and, hoisting out the boats, he gave the command to his first lieutenant, with strict injunctions how to deal with such treacherous and ferocious enemies. The launch was under repair at the time, and could not be employed; but the barge, pinnace, and two cutters were considered fully adequate to the service. Courtenay was second in command, in the pinnace; Seymour had charge of one cutter; and, at his own particular request, Prose was entrusted with the other.

"I do declare, I think that I should like to go," observed Prose, when he first heard that the vessel was to be cut out.

"Why, you ought, Prose," replied Seymour; "you have never been on service yet."

"No—and you and I are the only two passed midshipmen in the ship." (Seymour and Prose had both passed their examination, when the *Aspasia* was at Bombay.) "I think that I have a right to one of the boats."

So thought the first lieutenant, when he made his application, and he obtained the command accordingly.

The boats shoved off as soon as the men had swallowed their breakfasts, and in less than an hour were but a short distance from the proa, which proved to be one of the largest size. A discharge of landgrage from one of the two long brass guns, mounted on her prow, flew amongst the boats, without taking effect. A second discharge was more destructive, three of the men in the boat which Prose commanded being struck down, bleeding, under the thwarts—the oars, which they had not relinquished their hold of when they fell, being thrown high up in air.

"Halloa! I say—all catching crabs together!" cried Prose.

"Caught something worse than a crab, sir," replied the coxswain—"Wilson, are you much hurt?"

"The rascals have let daylight in, I'm afraid," answered the man, faintly.

"Well, I do declare I'd no idea the poor fellows were wounded. Coxswain, take one of the oars, and I'll steer the boat, or we never shall get alongside. I say, Mr Jolly, can't you pull?"

"Yes, sir, upon a pinch," answered the marine whom he addressed, laying his musket on the stern-sheets, and taking one of the unmanned oars.

"Well, there now, give way."

But the delay occasioned by this mishap had left the cutter far astern of the other boats, who, paying no attention to her, had pulled alongside, and boarded the vessel. The conflict was short, from the superior numbers of the English, and the little difficulty in getting on board of a vessel with so low a gunwale. By the time that Prose came alongside in the cutter, the pirates were either killed, or had been driven below. Prose jumped on the gunwale, flourishing his cutlass—from the gunwale he sprang on the deck, which was not composed of planks, as in vessels in general, but of long bamboos, running fore and aft, and lashed together with rattans; and as Prose descended upon the rounded surface, which happened where he alighted to be slippery with blood, his feet were thrown up, and he came down on the deck in a sitting posture.

"Capital jump, Mr Prose," cried Courtenay; "but you have arrived too late to shed your blood in your country's cause—very annoying, an't it?"

"O Lord!—O Lord!—I do declare—oh—oh—oh!" roared Prose, attempting to recover his feet, and then falling down again.

"Good heavens, what's the matter, Prose?" cried Seymour, running to his assistance.

"Oh Lord!—oh Lord!—another—oh!"—again cried Prose, making a half spring from the deck, from which he was now raised by Seymour, who again inquired what was the matter? Prose could not speak—he pointed his hand behind him, and his head fell upon Seymour's shoulder.

"He's wounded, sir," observed one of the men who had joined Seymour, pointing to the blood, which ran from the trousers of Prose in a little rivulet. "Be quick, Mr Seymour, and get on the gunwale, or they'll have you too." The fact was, that the deck being composed of bamboos, as already described, one of the pirates below had passed his creese through the spaces between them into Prose's body, when he came down on deck in a sitting posture, and had repeated the blow when he failed to recover his feet after the first wound.

One of the seamen, who had not provided himself with shoes, now received a severe wound; and after Prose had been handed into one of the boats, a consultation was held as to the most eligible method of proceeding.

It was soon decided that it would be the extreme of folly to attack such desperate people below, where they would have a great advantage with their creeses over the cutlasses of the seamen; and as there appeared no chance of inducing them to come up, it was determined to cut the cables, and tow the vessel alongside of the frigate, who could sink her with a broadside.

The cables were cut, and a few men being left on board to guard the hatchways, the boats commenced towing out; but scarcely had they got way on her, when, to their astonishment, a thick smoke was followed by the flames bursting out in every direction, consuming all on board with a rapidity that seemed incredible. From the deck, the fire mounted to the rigging; thence to the masts and sails, and before the boats could be backed astern to take them out, those who had been left were forced to leap into the sea to save themselves from the devouring element. The pirates had themselves set fire to the vessel. Most of them remained below, submitting to suffocation with sullen indifference. Some few, in the agony of combustion, were perceived, through the smoke, to leap overboard, and seek in preference a less painful death. The boats laid upon their oars, and witnessed the scene in silence and astonishment.

"Desperate and determined to the last," observed the first lieutenant.

In a very few minutes the proa, whose fabric was of the slightest materials, filled, and went down. The last column of smoke, divided from her by the water, ascended in the air as she sunk down below, and nought remained but a few burnt fragments of bamboo, which lay floating on the wave. A few seconds after the vessel had disappeared, one of the pirates rose on the surface.

"There is a man alive yet," observed Courtenay. "Let us save him if we can."

The boat, by his directions, pulled a few strokes of the oars, and having rather too much way, shot ahead, so as to bring the man close to the counter of the boat. Courtenay leaned over the gunwale to haul him in; the malignant wretch grasped him by the collar with his left hand, and with his right darted his creese into Courtenay's breast; then, as if satisfied, with an air of mingled defiance and derision, immediately sunk under the bottom of the pinnace, and was seen no more.

"Ungrateful viper!" murmured Courtenay, as he fell into the arms of his men.

The boats hastened back to the frigate; they had but few men hurt, except those mentioned in our narrative; but the wounds of Courtenay and of Prose were dangerous. The creeses of the pirates had been steeped in the juice of the pine-apple, which, when fresh applied, is considered as a deadly poison. The *Aspasia* soon afterwards anchored in Madras Roads, and a removal to a more invigorating clime was pronounced essential to the recovery of the two officers.

Courtenay and Prose were invalided, and sent home in an East Indiaman, but it was many months before they were in a state of convalescence. Captain M—— gave an acting order as lieutenant to Seymour, and when he joined the admiral, expressed himself so warmly in his behalf, that it was not superseded; and our hero now walked the quarter-deck as third lieutenant of H.M.'s ship *Aspasia*.

If the reader is not by this time tired of India, I am. To narrate all that occurred would far exceed the limits of this work. I shall therefore confine myself to stating that, after three years, Captain M—— quitted the country, having during his stay gained much in reputation, but lost more in constitution. When we return to the frigate, she will be well advanced on her passage home.

Chapter XLVII

> When souls which should agree to will the same—
> To have one common object for their wishes,
> Look diff'rent ways, regardless of each other,
> Think what a train of wretchedness ensues!
>
> Rowe.

But we must return to England, or we shall lose sight of the Rainscourt family, in which much that is interesting has occurred since our hero's absence in the East.

Mr Rainscourt made occasional visits to the Hall, with the hope of inducing his wife to break through her resolution, and once more to reside with him under the same roof; but in this he could not succeed: for although Mrs Rainscourt received him with kindness and urbanity, she was too well aware, by information received from many quarters, of the life of excess which he indulged in, ever again to trust her happiness in his keeping. Nevertheless, pursuing his point with an obstinacy that seemed surprising, Rainscourt always was to be found at the watering-place to which Mrs Rainscourt might remove for change of scene; and for nearly five years from the time when he first paid a visit to his once neglected wife, did he continue to press his suit. The fact was, that, so far from tiring, his anxiety to effect the reunion was constantly on the increase, from the general admiration which was bestowed upon Emily when she made her appearance in public; and Rainscourt felt that his house would be more resorted to, and his company be more courted, if he could have under his immediate protection one who had beauty sufficient to satisfy the most fastidious, and a certainty of ultimate wealth, exceeding the views of the most interested.

It was two years, or more, after the departure of Seymour, that Mrs Rainscourt and Emily determined upon passing the autumnal months at Cheltenham, accompanied by the M'Elvinas. A few days after their arrival, Mr Rainscourt made his appearance. He was now determined, if possible, to bring his suit to an issue. Some months back, he had formed the plan which he thought most likely to succeed. This was to repair and refurnish the castle in Galway, and persuade Mrs Rainscourt to pass a few weeks there—when he hoped that, having her in a more isolated position, she might be induced to accede to his wishes.

Workmen had been employed for some time repairing the exterior of the ancient pile—the interior had been embellished under the guidance of a man of taste, and without any regard to expense. Splendid furniture had already been forwarded from London; so that Mr Rainscourt's agent had written to him, that in a few weeks the castle would be ready for his reception.

Upon his arrival at Cheltenham, Mr Rainscourt astonished everybody by his splendid equipage. His carriages, his stud, and the whole of his establishment, were quite unique. On the other hand, Mrs Rainscourt and her daughter were equally objects of curiosity, not likely to pass unnoticed in such a place as Cheltenham, where people have nothing else to do but talk scandal, and to drink salt water as a punishment.

The arrival of a pretty heiress increased very much the flow of bile in the young ladies, and in their mammas, who did not bring them to Cheltenham merely to drink the waters. The gentlemen, moreover, did not admire being so totally eclipsed by Mr Rainscourt, who rendered insignificant what, previous to his appearance, had been considered to be "quite the thing." The ladies would talk of nothing but Mr Rainscourt and his equipage—and such a handsome man, too. But, on the whole, the females were the most annoyed, as there threatened to be a stagnation in the market, until this said heiress was disposed of. Gentlemen, who had been attentive more than a week, who had been asked twice to dinner, and who had been considered to have nibbled a sufficient time to ensure their eventually taking the bait, had darted in full liberty in the direction of the great heiress.

Young ladies, who were acknowledged to have the most attractions, pecuniary or personal, who simpered and smiled to twenty young philanderers, as they took their morning glass, now poured down their lukewarm solution in indignant solitude, if Mrs Rainscourt and her daughter made their appearance on the promenade. Real cases of bile became common; and the fair sex, in despair, although they did not, as they were evidently requested by the conduct of the gentlemen, "to a nunnery go," to preserve their complexions, were necessitated to repair to the pump.

"Don't you think that Miss Rainscourt's nose is rather too straight?" asked a young lady, with one on her own face that had a strong tendency towards the pug.

"Indeed I do not," replied a light-hearted Irish girl, "although she has put ours out of joint, as they call it. I only wish I'd her face or her fortune—either the one or the other—and I wouldn't be coming to Cheltenham after a husband—the gentlemen should trot over to Ireland."

"How very odd that Mr and Mrs Rainscourt should not live together—such good friends as they seem to be."

"Oh, I know the reason of that: I was told it yesterday by Lady Wagtail. It was a runaway match, and they happened to be related within the canonical law; they are both Roman Catholics: and the Pope found it out, and ordered them to be separated, upon pain of excommunication."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and Mr Rainscourt is waiting for a license from the conclave—a dispensation they call it. They say it is expected from Rome next post, and then they *can* be united again immediately."

"What beautiful horses Mr Rainscourt drives!"

"Yes, that curricle, with the greys and the outriders, is quite superb. He always drives through the turnpike, I observe."

"To be sure he does. Why, they say that he has £40,000 a year."

"And the whole is entailed upon his daughter."

"Every farthing of it."

"And who are those M'Elvinas?—What an odd name!"

"Oh, I can tell you. Mrs Fitzpatrick says that he is of a very ancient Irish family—they are very rich. Mr M'Elvina made his fortune in India, by a speculation in opium, and his wife was the only daughter of a stockbroker in the city, who died worth a plum."

"No. 4—a little warm, if you please, Mrs Bishop."

"Yes, miss."

About a fortnight after his arrival, Rainscourt received the intelligence from his agent that everything was complete at the castle, and he determined to go over himself to examine it previous to communicating his interested act of gallantry to his wife. He proposed to M'Elvina, with whom he was on very friendly terms, to accompany him, and M'Elvina was decided in accepting the offer, in consequence of Mr Rainscourt's having informed him that a large property, contiguous to his own, which had almost from time immemorial been in possession of the M'Elvina family, was now for sale, the last possessor having gambled the whole of it away.

"It may be worth your while," continued he, "if you are inclined to possess landed property, to look at it; as my agent informs me that it will be disposed of very cheap, and will give you good interest for your money."

M'Elvina had long wished to live in Ireland, from which country he derived his descent, and he could not but feel that some untoward recognition might possibly take place in such a place of numerous resort as Cheltenham, by which some of the passages in his early career might be exposed. This appeared to be a chance which might not again present itself, and he gladly consented to accompany Rainscourt on his excursion.

After an absence of three weeks they returned. The castle had been fitted out in a style of lavish expenditure and taste, and Rainscourt could find little to improve or add. The property which M'Elvina went over to examine, suited him both in price and in situation; and having consulted his wife, who cordially acquiesced in his view, he wrote to Mr Rainscourt's agent, requesting him to conclude the purchase.

Rainscourt now determined upon making his last effort for a resumption of marital rights. Having introduced the conversation by stating in minute detail the alterations and improvements which he had made at the castle, he then informed Mrs Rainscourt that he had been to that expense in the hope that she would take possession of it for the remainder of the autumn.

"If," said he, "you knew the pleasure it would give me once more to see you surrounded with every luxury, in the place where we formerly resided in poverty—if you knew the joy which your presence would diffuse among your affectionate tenants, and the anxiety with which they are expecting your appearance,—for I must acknowledge that I promised them that you should gladden them with your return,—you would not refuse the request I have made."

But Rainscourt had not calculated well. If there was any spot of which the reminiscences were peculiarly painful to his wife, it was the castle in Galway. It was there that she had been treated with severity and contempt—it was there that she had been cruelly deserted by her husband when he was restored to affluence. With the bitter feelings attendant upon these recollections, Mrs Rainscourt penetrated into the motives which had induced her husband to act, and the balance was more than ever against his cause. "If you have fitted up the castle to oblige me, Mr Rainscourt, I return you my grateful thanks for your kindness and consideration; but I do not think that I could enter the castle with pleasure; there are so many more painful than agreeable remembrances connected with it, that I had rather decline going there—the more so as I consider it too secluded for Emily."

"But not too secluded, Mrs Rainscourt," replied her husband, dropping on one knee, "for me to beseech pardon for my errors, and prove the sincerity of my repentance. Let me conjure you to allow it to be the scene of the renewal of my love and my admiration, as it unfortunately was of my folly and indifference."

"Mr Rainscourt, this interview must be decisive. Know, once for all, that such a reconciliation as you would desire never can or shall take place. Spare me the pain of recapitulation. It is enough to say that, once thrown from you, I cannot nor will not be resumed at your pleasure and fantasy. Although injured in the tenderest point, I forgive all that has passed, and shall be happy to receive you as a friend, in private as well as in public; but all attempts to obtain more will only meet with mortification and defeat. Rise, Mr Rainscourt. Take my hand in friendship—it is offered with cordiality; but if you again resume the subject of this meeting, I shall be forced to deny myself to you when you call."

Rainscourt turned pale as he complied with her request. He had humiliated himself to no purpose. Mortified pride, mingled with rejected passion, formed a compound of deadly hate, which raged with fury against the late object of his desire. He commanded himself sufficiently to stammer out his regrets, and promised not again to introduce the subject; and lifting up the offered hand respectfully to his lips, he quitted her presence to meditate upon revenge.

The liberal settlements which he had made at the time of separation, were too firmly secured to be withheld. To remove his daughter was the next idea which presented itself; but that could not be effected. Emily was of a resolute disposition, and would not consent to leave her mother; and an appeal to Chancery would show how unfit a person he was to have the responsible charge of a young woman. The night was passed in anxious meditation, and before the morning his plans were arranged. Nothing could be accomplished by force; he must therefore resort to address—he would be more than ever attentive, and trust to time and opportunity for the gratification of his revenge.

The parties continued at Cheltenham; and Mr Rainscourt, following up his plan, made an avowal to his wife, that he had now abandoned all hopes of success, and would not importune her any more. He only requested that she would receive him on those terms of intimacy in which consisted the present happiness of his life. Mrs Rainscourt, who, although she had resolution sufficient to refuse him, felt (as every woman must feel who has once loved a man) great struggles in her own mind to decide the victory in favour of prudence, now leaned more favourably towards her husband than before. His assiduity for years—his indifference to money in fitting up the castle to please her—his humiliation when he kneeled to her, an attitude that haunted her even in her dreams—his subsequent humble expressions of regret—his polite attention, notwithstanding his repulse—and, added to all these, her gratified pride—all tended to soften her heart; and it is more than probable that, in a few months, she would have thought him sufficiently punished to have acceded to his wishes,—but it was fated to be otherwise.

One morning, Rainscourt called in his curricle, and as the horses stood at the door, champing their bits, and tossing their heads as they were held by the dismounted grooms, Mrs Rainscourt, who was looking out of the window with her husband, and whose heart was fast warming towards him (for the tide once turned, the flow of affection is rapid), playfully observed, "Mr Rainscourt, you often take Emily out with you in your curricle, but you have never offered to take me; I presume you think that I am too old."

"Indeed, Mrs Rainscourt, if I had thought that you would have ventured, Emily would not so often have been seated at my side. If not too late, and you will pardon my negligence, oblige me by permitting me to drive you now."

"I don't know whether I ought to do so; but as married ladies have been, from time immemorial, forced from the field by their daughters, I believe I shall submit to the affront, and accept your offer."

"I feel much flattered," replied he, "by your kind acquiescence; but you must allow me to desire my grooms to take these horses out, and put the others to, which are much quieter. It will be a delay of only a few minutes."

Mrs Rainscourt smiled, and quitted the room, to prepare for her excursion, while Rainscourt descended to the street door.

"William, drive to the stables; take these horses out, and put in the two others."

"The others, sir!" replied the man with surprise; "what! Smolensko and Pony-towksy?"

"Yes—be smart, and bring them round as soon as you can."

"Why, sir, the two young 'uns have never been in together yet—Smolensko's but a rum customer, when aside of a steady horse; and as for Pony-towsky, he jibs just as bad as ever."

"Never mind—put them in and bring them round."

"Then I'd better tie up the dog, sir, for they can't neither of them abide him."

"Never mind—they must be accustomed to him—so let the dog follow as usual. Be quick;" and Rainscourt returned to the house.

"Sam, I can't for the life on me fancy what master's at to-day," said William, who had delivered his horse over to the other groom, and had mounted the curricle to drive it to the stable. "If he means to drive them two devils together, there's no road in England wide enough for him."

"I'm sure I can't tell," replied the other.

"No man in his senses would do it—unless, indeed, he's going to drive his wife."

"Why hardly that, for they say he wants to marry her again."

"Marry his wife *again*!—no, no, Bill; master's too wide awake for that."

The curricle re-appeared at the door—Rainscourt handed in his wife, and the horses set off, tightly reined by Rainscourt, and flying to and fro from the pole, so as to alarm Mrs Rainscourt, who expressed a wish to alight.

"They are only fresh at first starting, my dear—they will be quiet directly."

"Look there!" observed one of the promenaders; "there's Rainscourt driving his wife in the curricle."

"Oh then, the bull has arrived, you may depend upon it."

As they spoke, the dog made a spring at the horse's heads,—they plunged violently, and shortly after set off at full speed.

Rainscourt could not have stopped them if he had wished it; but the fact was, that he had entered the curricle determined to hazard his own life rather than not gratify his revenge. All that was left for him was to guide them, and this he did so that the near wheel came in contact with a post. The horses, with the pole and broken traces, continued their rapid career, leaving Rainscourt, his wife, and the fragments of the vehicle, in the road.

Rainscourt's plan had been successful. Although much contused by the fall, he was not severely injured. Mrs Rainscourt, who had been thrown out with more violence, over the head of her husband, was taken up with a fractured skull, and in a few minutes breathed her last.

Chapter XLVIII

> Oh, for a forty-parson power to chant
> Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh, for a hymn
> Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
> Not practise!
>
> Byron.
>
> Hypocrisy, the thriving'st calling,
> The only saint's-bell that rings all in:
> A gift that is not only able
> To domineer among the rabble,
> But by the law's empowered to rout,
> And awe the greatest that stand out.
>
> *Hudibras.*

"All-pervading essence, whose subtle spirit hath become a part component of everything this universe contains—power that presidest over nations and countries, kingdoms and cities, courts and palaces, and every human tenement, even to the lowly cot—leaven of the globe, that workest in the councils of its princes, in the reasonings of its senates, in the atmosphere of the court, in the traffic of the city, in the smiles of the enamoured youth, and in the blush of the responding maid—thou that clothest with awe the sergeant's coif and the bishop's robe—thou that assistest at our nurture, our education, and our marriage, our death, our funeral, and habiliments of woe,—all hail!

"Chameleon spirit—at once contributing to the misery of our existence and adding to its fancied bliss—at once detested and a charm, to be eschewed and to be practised—that, with thy mystic veil, dimmest the bright beauty of virtue, and concealest the dark deformity of vice—imperishable, glorious, and immortal Humbug! Hail!

"Thee I invoke—and thus, with talismanic pen, commence my spells,—and charge thee, in the name of courtier's bows, of great men's promises, of bribery oaths, of woman's smiles, and tears of residuary legatees—

"Appear!

"By thy favourite works,—thy darling sinking fund,—the blessings of free trade,—thy joint-stock companies,—the dread of Popery—the liberality of East India Directors, and the sincerity of West India philanthropists—

"Descend!

"By the annual pageants—by the Lord Mayor's show, and reform in Parliament—by Burdett's democracy, and the first of April—by explanations, and calls for papers—by Bartlemy fair, and the minister's budget—

"Come!

"By lawyers' consultations, and Chancery delay—public meetings, and public dinners—loyal toasts, and 'three times three'—lady patronesses, and lords directors,—and by the decoy subscription of the chair—

"Descend!

"By the *nolo episcopari* of the Bishops—

"Come!

"By newspaper puffs, and newspaper reports,—by patent medicines, and portable dressing-cases, wine-merchant's bottles, ne-plus-ultra corkscrews,—H——t's corn, C——tt's maize, W——'s blacking, and W——'s champagne—

"Appear!

"By thy professional followers, the fashionable tailors, hairdressers, bootmakers, milliners, jewellers—all the auctioneers, and all the bazaars—

"Come to my aid!

"By thy interested worshippers—by shuffling W——e, by Z—— M——y, Lawyer S——ns, W——m S——th, T——l B——n, Sir G——r M'G——r, and Dom M——l—

"Appear!

"By thy talented votaries—

"Descend!

"Still heedless!—Then by the living B——m, and the shade of C——g, come!

"Rebellious and wayward spirit! I tell thee, come thou must, whether thou art at a council to wage a war in which thousands shall perish, or upon the padding of a coat, by which, unpaid for, but one-ninth part of a man shall suffer—whether thou art forging the powerful artillery of woman against unarmed man, and directing the fire from her eye, which, like that of the Egyptian queen, shall lose an empire—or art just as busy in the adjustment of the bustle * of a lady's maid—appear thou must. There is one potent spell, one powerful name, which shall force thee trembling to my presence.—Now—

"By all that is *contemptible*—

"By all his patriotism, his affection for the army and the navy—by his flow of eloquence, and his strength of argument—by the correctness of his statements, and the precision of his arithmetic—by his sum *tottle*, and by Joey H——e, himself—

"Appear!"

[*Humbug descends, amidst a discharge of Promethean and copperplate thunder.*]

"'Tis well! Now perch upon the tip, and guide my pen, and contrive that the wickedness and hypocrisy of the individual may be forgotten in the absurdity of the scene."

The grooms made no scruple, after the catastrophe, to state all that had passed between them and their master; it was spread through Cheltenham with the usual rapidity of all scandal, in a place where people have nothing to do but to talk about each other. The only confutation which the report received, was the conduct of Mr Rainscourt.

---

* I am not certain whether I spell this modern invention correctly; if not, I must plead ignorance. I have asked several ladies of my acquaintance, who declare that they never heard of such a thing, which, perhaps the reader will agree with me, is all humbug.

He was positively inconsolable—he threw himself upon the remains, declaring that nothing should separate him from his dear—dear Clara. The honest old curate, who had attended Mrs Rainscourt in her last moments, had great difficulty, with the assistance of the men-servants, in removing him to another chamber on the ensuing day. Some declared that he repented of his unkind behaviour, and that he was struck with remorse; the females observed, that men never knew the value of a wife until they lost her; others thought his grief was all humbug, although they acknowledged, at the same time, that they could not find out any interested motives to induce him to act such a part.

But when Mr Rainscourt insisted that the heart of the deceased should be embalmed, and directed it to be enshrined in an urn of massive gold, then all Cheltenham began to think that he was sincere,—at least all the ladies did; and the gentlemen, married or single, were either too wise or too polite to offer any negative remark, when his conduct was pronounced to be a pattern for all husbands. Moreover, Mr Potts, the curate, vouched for his sincerity, in consequence of the handsome gratuity which he had received for consigning Mrs Rainscourt to the vault, and the liberal largess to the poor upon the same occasion. "How could any man prove his sincerity more?" thought Mr Potts, who, blinded by gratitude, forgot that although in affliction our hearts are softened towards the miseries of others, on the other hand, we are quite as (if not more) liberal when intoxicated with good fortune.

Be it as it may, the conduct of Mr Rainscourt was pronounced most exemplary. All hints and surmises of former variance were voted scandalous, and all Cheltenham talked of nothing but the dead Mrs Rainscourt, the living Mr Rainscourt, the heart, and the magnificent gold urn.

"Have you heard how poor Mr Rainscourt is?" was the usual question at the pump, as the ladies congregated to pour down No. 3 or No. 4, in accordance with the directions of the medical humbugs.

"More resigned—they say he was seen walking after dark."

"Was he, indeed? to the churchyard, of course. Poor dear man!"

"Miss Emily's maid told my Abigail last night, that she looks quite beautiful in her mourning. But I suppose she will not come on the promenade again, before she leaves Cheltenham."

"She ought not," replied a young lady, who did not much approve of so handsome an heiress remaining at Cheltenham. "It will be very incorrect if she does; some one ought to tell her so."

With the exception of Mr Potts, no one had dared to break in upon the solitude of Mr Rainscourt, who had remained the whole day upon the sofa, with the urn on the table before him, and the shutters closed to exclude the light. The worthy curate called upon him every evening, renewing his topics of consolation, and pointing out the duty of Christian resignation. A deep sigh! a heavy Ah! or a long-drawn Oh! were all the variety of answers that could be obtained for some days. But time does wonders: and Mr Rainscourt at last inclined an ear to the news of the day, and listened with marked attention to the answers which he elicited from the curate, by his indirect questions, as to what the world said about him.

"Come, come, Mr Rainscourt, do not indulge your grief any more. Excess becomes criminal. It is my duty to tell you so, and yours to attend to me. It is not to be expected that you will immediately return to the world and its amusements; but as there must be a beginning, why not come and take your family dinner to-day with Mrs Potts and me? Now let me persuade you—she will be delighted to see you—we dine at five. A hot joint—nothing more."

Rainscourt, who was rather tired of solitude, refused in such a way as to induce the worthy curate to reiterate his invitation, and at length, with great apparent unwillingness, consented. The curate sat with him until the dinner hour, when, leaning on the pastor's arm, Rainscourt walked down the street, in all the trappings of his woe, and his eyes never once raised from the ground.

"There's Mr Rainscourt!" "There's Mr Rainscourt!" whispered some of the promenaders who were coming up the street.

"No! that's not him."

"Yes it is, walking with Mr Potts! Don't you see his beautiful large dog following him? He never walks without it! An't it a beauty? It's a Polygar dog from the East Indies. His name is Tippoo."

The house of the curate was but a short distance from the lodgings occupied by Mr Rainscourt. They soon entered, and were hid from the prying eyes of the idle and the curious.

"I have persuaded Mr Rainscourt to come and take a family dinner with us, my dear."

"Quite delighted to see him," replied Mrs Potts, casting a sidelong angry glance at her husband.

Mr Rainscourt made a slight bow, and threw himself on the sofa, covering his face with his hand, as if the light was hideous.

Mrs Potts took the opportunity of escaping by the door, beckoning to her husband as soon as she was outside.

"And I will go and decant the wine.—Quite in the family way, Mr Rainscourt—no ceremony. You'll excuse me," continued the curate, as he obeyed the summons of his wife, like a school-boy ordered up to be *birched*.

"Well, my dear," interrogated Mr Potts, humbly, as soon as the door was closed. But Mrs Potts made no reply, until she had led her husband to such a distance from the parlour as she imagined would prevent Mr Rainscourt from being roused by the high pitch to which she intended to raise her voice.

"I do declare, Mr Potts, you are a complete *fool*. Saturday—all the maids washing—and ask him to dinner!

There's positively nothing to eat. It really is too provoking."

"Well, my dear, what does it matter? The poor man will, in all probability, not eat a bit—he is so overcome."

"So over-fiddlesticked!" replied the lady. "Grief never hurts the appetite, Mr Potts; on the contrary, people care more then about a good dinner than at other times. It's the only enjoyment they can have without being accused by the world of want of feeling."

"Well, you know better than I, my dear; but I really think, that if you were to die I could not eat a bit."

"And I tell you, Mr Potts, I could, if you were to die to-morrow.—So stupid of you!—Sally, run and take off the tablecloth,—it's quite dirty; put on one of the fine damask."

"They will be very large for the table, ma'am."

"Never mind—be quick, and step next door, and ask the old German to come in and wait at table. He shall have a pint of strong beer."

Sally did as she was bid. Mr Potts, whose wine had been decanted long before, and Mrs Potts, who had vented her spleen upon her husband, returned into the parlour together.

"My dear Mr Potts is so particular about decanting his wine," observed the lady, with a gracious smile, as she entered—"he is so long about it, and scolds me so, if ever I wish to do it for him."

Mr Potts was a little surprised at the last accusation; but as he had long been drilled, he laughed assent. A tedious half hour—during which the lady held all the conversation to herself, for the curate answered only in monosyllabic compliance, and Rainscourt made no answer whatever—elapsed before dinner was announced by the German mercenary who had been subsidised.

"Meinheer, de dinner was upon de table."

"Come, Mr Rainscourt," said the curate in a persuasive tone.

Rainscourt got up, and without offering his arm to the lady, who had her own bowed-out in readiness, stalked out of the room by the side of Mr Potts, followed by his wife, who, by her looks, seemed to imply that she considered that the demise of one woman was no excuse for a breach of politeness towards another.

The covers were removed—two small soles (much *too small* for three people) and a dish of potatoes. "Will you allow me to offer you a little sole, Mr Rainscourt? I am afraid you will have a very poor dinner."

Rainscourt bowed in the negative, and the soles disappeared in a very short time between the respective organs of mastication of Mr and Mrs Potts.

The dishes of the first course were removed; and the German appeared with a covered dish, followed by Sally, who brought some vegetables, and returned to the kitchen for more.

"I am afraid you will have a very poor dinner," repeated the lady.—"Take off the cover, Sneider.—Will you allow me to help you to a piece of this?"

Rainscourt turned his head round, to see if the object offered was such as to tempt his appetite, and beheld a—*smoking bullock's heart!*

"My wife, my wife!" exclaimed he, as he darted from his chair; and covering his face, as if to hide from his sight the object which occasioned the concatenation of ideas, attempted to run out of the room.

But his escape was not so easy. In his hurried movement he had entangled himself with the long table-cloth that trailed on the carpet, and, to the dismay of the party, everything that was on the table was swept off in his retreat: and as he had blindfolded himself, he ran with such force against the German, who was in the act of receiving a dish from Sally, that, precipitating him against her, they both rolled prostrate on the floor.

"Ah, mein Got, mein Got!" roared the German, as his face was smothered with the hot stewed peas, a dish of which he was carrying as he fell on his back.

"Oh, my eye, my eye!" bellowed Sally, as she rolled upon the floor.

"My wife, my wife!" reiterated Rainscourt, as he trampled over them, and secured his retreat.

"And oh, my dinner, my dinner!" ejaculated the curate, as he surveyed the general wreck.

"And oh, you fool, you fool, Mr Potts!" echoed the lady, with her arms a-kimbo—"to ask such a man to dine with you!"

"Well, I had no idea that he could have taken it so much to *heart*," replied the curate meekly.

But we must follow Rainscourt, who—whether really agitated by the circumstance, or, aware that it would be bruited abroad, thought that a display of agitation would be advisable—proceeded with hurried steps to the promenades, where he glided through the thoughtless crowd with the silent rapidity of a ghost. Having sufficiently awakened the curiosity of the spectators, he sank down on one of the most retired benches, with his eyes for some time thrown up in contemplation of the fleecy clouds, beyond which kind spirits are supposed to look down, and weep over the follies and inconsistencies of an erring world. Casting his eyes to earth, he beheld—horror upon horrors—the detested bullock's heart, which his great Polygar dog had seized during the confusion of the dinner scene, and had followed him out with it in his mouth. Fnding it too hot to carry immediately after its seizure, he had for a time laid it down, and had just arrived with it. There he was, not a foot from the bench, his jaws distended with the prize, tossing up his head as if in mockery of his master, and wagging his long, feathered tail.

Rainscourt again made a precipitate retreat to his own lodgings, accompanied by the faithful animal, who, delighted at the unusual rapidity of his master's movements, bounded before him with his treasure, of which he was much too polite to think of making a repast until a more seasonable opportunity. Rainscourt knocked at the door—as soon as it was opened, the dog bounced up before him, entering the chamber of woe, and crouching under the table upon which the golden urn was placed, with the heart between his paws, saluted his master with a rap or two of his tail on the carpet, and commenced his dinner.

The servant was summoned, and Rainscourt, without looking at either the urn, the dog, or the man, cried—in an angry tone, "Take that heart, and throw it away immediately."

"Sir!" replied the domestic with astonishment, who did not observe the dog and his occupation.

"Throw it away immediately, sir—do you hear?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man, taking the urn from the table and quitting the room with it, muttering to himself, as he descended the stairs, "I thought it wouldn't last long." Having obeyed his supposed instructions, he returned—"If you please, sir, where am I to put the piece of plate?"

"The piece of plate!" Rainscourt turned round, and beheld the vacant urn. It was too much—that evening he ordered the horses, and left Cheltenham for ever.

Various were the reports of the subsequent week. Some said that the fierce dog had broke open the urn, and devoured the embalmed heart. Some told one story—some another; and, before the week was over, all the stories had become incomprehensible.

In one point they all agreed—that Mr Rainscourt's grief was all humbug.

. . . . . .

"'Tis well!—Thou hast 'done thy spiriting gently,' or, for thy tardy coming, I would have sentenced thee to the task of infusing thy spirit into the consistent Eldon, or into Arthur duke of Wellington—where, like a viper at a file, thou shouldest have tortured thyself in vain."

Chapter XLIX

There leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep,
Stretch'd like a promontory, sleeps or swims.
MILTON.

CONGRATULATE me, Reader, that, notwithstanding I have been beating against wind and tide, that is to say, writing this book through all the rolling and pitching, headache and indigestion, incident to the confined and unnatural life of a sailor, I have arrived at my last chapter. You may be surprised at this assertion, finding yourself in the middle of the third volume; but such is the fact. Doubtless you have imagined, that, according to the usual method, I had begun at the beginning, and would have finished at the end. Had I done so, this work would not have been so near unto a close as, thank Heaven, it is at present. At times I have been gay, at others, sad; and I am obliged to write according to my humour, which, as variable as the wind, seldom continues in one direction. I have proceeded with this book as I should do if I had had to build a ship. The dimensions of every separate piece of timber I knew by the sheer-draught which laid before me. It therefore made no difference upon which I began, as they all were to be cut out before I bolted them together. I should have taken them just as they came to hand, and sorted them for their respective uses. My keel is laid on the slips, and my stern is raised; these will do for futtocks—these for beams. I lay those aside for riders; and out of these gnarled and twisted pieces of oak, I select my knees. It is of little consequence on which my adze is first employed. Thus it was that a fit of melancholy produced the last half of the third volume; and my stern-post, transoms and fashion-pieces, were framed out almost before my floor-timbers were laid.

But you will perceive that this is of no consequence. All are now bolted together; and, with the exception of a little dubbing away here and there, a little gingerbread work, and a coat of paint, she is ready for launching.

Now all is ready.—Give me the bottle of wine—and as she rushes into the sea of public opinion, upon which her merits are to be ascertained, I christen her "THE KING'S OWN."

And now that she is afloat, I must candidly acknowledge that I am not exactly pleased with her. To speak technically, her figure-head is not thrown out enough. To translate this observation into plain English, I find, on turning over the different chapters, that my hero, as I have often designated him, is not sufficiently the hero of my tale. As soon as he is shipped on board of a man-of-war, he becomes as insignificant as a midshipman must unavoidably be, from his humble situation. I see the error—yet I cannot correct it, without overthrowing all "rules and regulations," which I cannot persuade myself to do, even in a work of fiction. Trammelled as I am by "the service," I can only plead guilty to what it is impossible to amend without commencing *de novo*—for everything, and everybody, must find their level on board of a king's ship.

Well, I've one comfort left—Sir Walter Scott has never succeeded in making a hero; or, in other words, his best characters are not those which commonly go under the designation of "the hero." I am afraid there is something irreclaimably insipid in these *preux chevaliers*.

But I must go in search of the *Aspasia*. There she is, with studding-sails set, about fifty miles to the northward of the Cape of Good Hope; and I think that when the reader has finished this chapter, he will be inclined to surmise that the author, as well as the *Aspasia*, has most decidedly "doubled the Cape."

The frigate was standing her course before a light breeze, at the rate of four or five knots an hour, and Captain M—— was standing at the break of the gangway, talking with the first lieutenant, when the man stationed at the mast-head called out, "A rock on the lee-bow!"

The Télémaque shoal, which is supposed to exist somewhere to the southward of the Cape, but whose situation has never been ascertained, had just before been the subject of their conversation.

Startled at the intelligence, Captain M—— ordered the studding-sails to be taken in, and, hailing the man at the masthead, inquired how far the rock was distant from the ship.

"I can see it off the fore-yard," answered Pearce, the master, who had immediately ascended the rigging upon the report.

The first lieutenant now went aloft, and soon brought it down to the lower ratlines. In a few minutes it was distinctly seen from the deck of the frigate.

The ship's course was altered three or four points, that no risk might be incurred; and Captain M——, directing the people aloft to keep a sharp look-out for any change in the colour of the water, continued to near the supposed danger in a slanting direction.

The rock appeared to be about six or seven feet above the water's edge, with a base of four or five feet in diameter. To the great surprise of all parties, there was no apparent change in colour to indicate that they shoaled their water; and it was not until they hove-to within two cables' length, and the cutter was ordered to be cleared away to examine it, that they perceived that the object of their scrutiny was in motion. This was now evident, and in a direction crossing the stern of the ship.

"I think that it is some kind of fish," observed Seymour; "I saw it raise its tail a little out of the water."

And such it proved to be, as it shortly afterwards passed the ship within half a cable's length. It was a large spermaceti whale, on the head of which some disease had formed an enormous spongy excrescence which had the appearance of a rock, and was so buoyant that, although the animal made several attempts as it approached the ship, it could not sink under water. Captain M——, satisfied that it really was as we have described, again made sail, and pursued his course.

"It is very strange and very important," observed he, "that a disease of any description can scarcely be confined to one individual, but must pervade the whole species. This circumstance may account for the many rocks reported to have been seen in various parts of the southern hemisphere, and which have never been afterwards fallen in with. A more complete deception I never witnessed."

"Had we hauled off sooner, and not have examined it, I should have had no hesitation in asserting, most confidently, that we had seen a rock," answered the first lieutenant.

Captain M—— went below, and was soon after at table with the first lieutenant and Macallan, who had been invited to dine in the cabin. After dinner, the subject was again introduced. "I have my doubts, sir," observed the first lieutenant, "whether I shall ever venture to tell the story in England. I never should be believed."

"*Le vrai n'est pas toujours vraisemblable*," answered Captain M——; "and I am afraid that too often a great illiberality is shown towards travellers, who, after having encountered great difficulties and dangers, have the mortification not to be credited upon their return. Although credulity is to be guarded against, I do not know a greater proof of ignorance than refusing to believe anything because it does not exactly coincide with one's own ideas. The more confined these may be, from want of education or knowledge, the more incredulous people are apt to become. Two of the most enterprising travellers of modern days, Bruce and Le Vaillant, were ridiculed and discredited upon their return. Subsequent travellers, who went the same track as the former, with a view to confute, were obliged to corroborate his assertions; and all who have followed the latter have acknowledged the correctness of his statements."

"Your observations remind me of the story of the old woman and her grandson," replied the first lieutenant. "You recollect it, I presume."

"Indeed I do not," said Captain M——; "pray favour me with it."

The first lieutenant then narrated, with a considerable degree of humour, the following story:—

"A lad, who had been some years at sea, returned home to his aged grandmother, who was naturally curious to hear his adventures.—'Now, Jack,' said the old woman, 'tell me all you've seen, and tell me the most wonderful things first.'"

"'Well, granny, when we were in the Red Sea, we anchored close to the shore, and when we hove the anchor up, there was a chariot wheel hanging to it.'

"'Oh! Jack, Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea, you know; that proves the Bible is all true. Well, Jack, and what else did you see?'

"'Why, granny, when I was in the West Indies, I saw whole mountains of sugar, and the rivers between them were all rum.'

"'True, true,' said the old woman, smacking her lips; 'we get all the sugar and rum from there, you know. Pray, Jack, did you ever see a mermaid?"

"'Why no, mother, but I've seen a merman.'

"'Well, let's hear, Jack.'

"'Why, mother, when we anchored to the northward of St Kitt's one Sunday morning, a voice called us from alongside, and when we looked over, there was a merman just come to the top of the water; he stroked down his hair, and touched it, as we do our hats, to the captain, and told him that he would feel much obliged to him to trip his anchor, as it had been let go just before the door of his house below, which they could not open in consequence, and his wife would be too late to go to church.'

"'God bless me!' says the old woman; 'why, they're Christians, I do declare!—And now, Jack, tell me something more.'

"Jack, whose invention was probably exhausted, then told her that he had seen hundreds of fish flying in the air.

"'Come, come, Jack,' said the old woman, 'now you're *bamming* me—don't attempt to put such stories off on your old granny. The chariot wheel I can believe, because it is likely; the sugar and rum I know to be true: and also the merman, for I have seen pictures of them. But as for fish flying in the air, Jack—that's a lie.'"

"Excellent," said Captain M——; "then the only part that was true she rejected, believing all the monstrous lies that he had coined."

"If any unknown individual," observed Macallan, "and not Captain Cook, had reported the existence of such an animal as the ornithorynchus, or duck-billed platypus, without bringing home the specimen as a proof, who would have credited his statement?"

"No one," replied Captain M——. "Still, such is the scepticism of the present age, that travellers must be content with having justice done to them after they are dead."

"That's but cold comfort, sir," replied the first lieutenant, rising from the table, which movement was immediately followed by the remainder of the guests, who bowed, and quitted the cabin.

NOTE.—It is singular that the almost incredible story in the above chapter is, perhaps, the only real fact in the whole book. It will be found in the log of the ship, and signed by all the officers; and yet many of my readers will be inclined to reject this, and believe a considerable portion of the remainder of the composition to have been drawn from living characters; if so, they will be like the *old woman.*

Chapter L

Cym. Guiderius had
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star.
Bel. This is he,
Who hath upon him still that stamp.
SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Mr Rainscourt left Cheltenham, he wrote a hasty note to the M'Elvinas, requesting that they would take charge of Emily, whose presence would be necessary at the Hall—and, when they had arranged their own affairs, would bring her with them over to Ireland, where it was his intention to reside for some time. A few days after Rainscourt had quitted Cheltenham, Emily, who, since her mother's death, had remained with the M'Elvinas, was accompanied by them to that home which, for the first time, she returned to with regret.

It may be inquired by the reader, whether Rainscourt was not harassed by his conscience. I never heard that he showed any outward signs. Conscience has been described as a most importunate monitor, paying no respect to persons, and making cowards of us all. Now, as far as I have been able to judge from external evidence, there is not a greater courtier than conscience. It is true, that when in adversity, he upbraids us, and holds up the catalogue of our crimes so close to our noses, that we cannot help reading every line. It is true, that, when suffering with disease, and terrified with the idea of going we know not where, he assails the enfeebled mind and body, and scares away the little resolution we have left. But in the hey-day of youth, in the vigour of health, with the means of administering to our follies, and adding daily and hourly to our crimes, he "never mentions hell to ears polite." In fact, he never attacks a man who has more than ten thousand a year. Like a London tradesman, he never presents his bill as long as you give him fresh orders that will increase it; but once prove yourself to be "cleaned out," by no longer swelling the amount, and he pounces upon you, and demands a post-obit bond upon the next world, which, like all others, will probably be found very disagreeable and inconvenient to liquidate. Conscience, therefore, is not an honest, sturdy adviser, but a sneaking scoundrel, who allows you to run into his debt, never caring to tell you, as a caution, but rather concealing your bill from you, as long as there is a chance of your increasing its length—satisfied that, eventually, he must be paid in some shape or other.

The M'Elvinas, who could not leave Emily by herself, took up their abode at the Hall, until the necessary arrangements had been completed, and then removed with her to the cottage, that they might attend to their own affairs. Emily was deeply affected at the loss of her mother. She had always been a kind and indulgent friend, who had treated her more as an equal than as one subject to authority and control. The M'Elvinas were anxious to remove Emily from the Hall, where every object that presented itself formed a link of association with her loss, and, trifles in themselves, would occasion a fresh burst of grief from the affectionate and sorrowful girl. And she may be pardoned when I state, that, perhaps, the bitterest tears which were shed were those when she threw herself on that sofa where she had remained after the abrupt departure of William Seymour.

The vicar hastened to offer his condolence ; and finding that Emily was as resigned as could be expected, after a long visit walked out with M'Elvina, that he might have a more detailed account of the unfortunate event. M'Elvina related it circumstantially, but without communicating the suspicions which the story of the grooms had occasioned, for he was aware that the vicar was too charitable to allow anything but positive evidence to be of weight in an accusation so degrading to human nature.

"It is strange," observed the vicar, very gravely, "but it seems as if a fatality attended the possessors of this splendid estate. The death of Admiral De Courcy was under most painful circumstances, without friend or relation to close his eyes ; it was followed by that of his immediate heir, who was drowned as soon almost as the property devolved to him—and I, who was appointed to be his guardian, never beheld my charge. Now we have another violent death of the possessor—and all within the space of twelve or thirteen years. You have probably heard something of the singular history of the former heir to the estate ?"

"I heard you state that he was drowned at sea ; but nothing further."

"Or, rather, supposed to be, for we never had proof positive. He was sent away in a prize, which never was heard of; and, although there is no confirmation of the fact, I have no doubt but he was lost. I do not know when I was so much distressed as at the death of that child. There was a peculiarity of incident in his history, the facts of which I have not as yet communicated to any one, as there are certain points which even distant branches of the family may wish to keep concealed—yet, upon a promise of secrecy, Mr M'Elvina, I will impart them to you."

The promise being given, the vicar commenced with the history of Admiral De Courcy,—his treatment of his wife and children,—the unfortunate marriage, and more unfortunate demise of Edward Peters, or rather of Edward De Courcy — the acknowledgment of his grandson by Admiral De Courcy on his death-bed—the account of Adams—his death—the boy being sent away in a prize, and drowned at sea. "I have all the particulars in writing," continued the good man, "and the necessary documents; and his identity was easy to be proved by the mark of the broad-arrow imprinted on his shoulder by old Adams."

"Heavens! is it possible?" exclaimed M'Elvina, grasping the arm of the vicar.

"What do you mean?"

"Mean!—I mean that the boy is alive—has been in your company within the last two years."

"That boy?"

"Yes, that boy—that boy is William Seymour."

"Merciful God! how inscrutable are Thy ways!" exclaimed the vicar with astonishment and reverence. "Explain to me, my dear sir,—how can you establish your assertion?"

If the reader will refer back to the circumstance of the vicar calling upon Captain M——, he will observe, that, upon being made acquainted with the loss of the child, he was so much shocked that he withdrew without imparting the particulars to one who was a perfect stranger; and, on the other hand, Captain M——, when Seymour again made his appearance, after an interval of three years, not having been put in possession of these facts, or even knowing the vicar's address or name, had no means of communicating the intelligence of the boy's recovery.

"I must now, sir," said M'Elvina to the vicar, "return the confidence which you have placed in me, under the same promise of secrecy, by making you acquainted with some particulars of *my* former life, at which I acknowledge I have reason to blush, and which nothing but the interests of William Seymour would have induced me to disclose."

M'Elvina then acknowledged his having formerly been engaged in smuggling—his picking up the boy from the wreck—his care of him for three years—the capture of his vessel by Captain M——, and the circumstances that had induced Captain M—— to take the boy under his protection. The mark was as legible as ever, and there could be no doubt of his identity being satisfactorily established.

The vicar listened to the narration with the interest which it deserved, and acknowledged his conviction of the clearness of the evidence, by observing—

"This will be a heavy blow to our dear Emily."

"Not a very heavy one, I imagine," replied M'Elvina, who immediately relieved the mind of the worthy man by communicating the attachment between them, and the honourable behaviour of Seymour.

"How very strange this is!" replied the vicar. "It really would be a good subject for a novel. I only trust that, like all inventions of the kind, it may end as happily."

"I trust so too; but let us now consider what must be done."

"I should advise his being sent for immediately."

"And so should I: but I expect, from the last accounts which I received from him, that the ship will have left her station to return home before our letters can arrive there. My plan is, to keep quiet until his return. The facts are known, and can be established by us alone. Let us immediately take such precautions as our legal advisers may think requisite, that proofs may not be wanting in case of our sudden demise; but we must not act until he arrives in the country, for Mr Rainscourt is a difficult and dangerous person to deal with."

"You are right," replied the vicar; "when do you leave this for Ireland?"

"In a few days—but I shall be ready to appear the moment that I hear of the ship's arrival. In the meantime, I shall make the necessary affidavits, in case of accident."

M'Elvina and the vicar separated. M'Elvina, like a dutiful husband, communicated the joyful intelligence to his wife, and his wife, to soothe Emily under her affliction, although she kept the secret, now talked of Seymour. In a few days the arrangements were made—the cottage was put into an agent's hands to be disposed of; and, quitting with regret an abode in which they had passed some years of unalloyed happiness, they set off for Galway, where they found Rainscourt on their arrival. Consigning his daughter to his care, they removed to their own house, which was on the property which M'Elvina had purchased, and about four miles distant from the castle. M'Elvina's name was a passport to the hearts of his tenants, who declared that the head of the house had come unto his own again. That he had the true eye of the M'Elvina, there was no mistaking, for no other family had such an eye. That his honour had gladdened their hearts by seeing the property into the ould family again—as ould a one as any in ould Ireland.

M'Elvina, like a wise man, held his tongue; and then they talked of their misfortunes—of the bad potato crop—of arrears of rent—one demand was heaped upon another, until M'Elvina was ultimately obliged to refer them all to the agent, whom be requested to be as lenient as possible.

Emily was now reinstated in the castle where she had passed the first years of her existence, and found that all in it was new, except her old nurse, Norah. The contiguity of the M'Elvinas was a source of comfort to her, for she could not admire the dissipated companions of her father. Her life was solitary—but she had numerous resources within herself, and the winter passed rapidly away.

In the spring, she returned to London with her father, who proudly introduced his daughter. Many were the solicitations of those who admired her person, or her purse. But in vain: her heart was pre-engaged; and it was with pleasure that she returned to Ireland, after the season was over, to renew her intimacy with the M'Elvinas, and to cherish, in her solitude, the remembrance of the handsome and high-minded William Seymour.

Chapter LI

> And now, with sails declined,
> The wandering vessel drove before the wind;
> Toss'd and retoss'd aloft, and then alow;
> Nor port they seek, nor certain course they know,
> But every moment wait the coming blow.
>
> DRYDEN.

THREE days after the *Aspasia* had taken a fresh departure from the Western Isles, a thick fog came on, the continuance of which prevented them from ascertaining their situation by the chronometer. The wind, which blew favourably from the south-east, had, by their dead reckoning, driven them as far north as the latitude of Ushant, without their once having had an opportunity of finding out the precise situation of the frigate. The wind now shifted more to the eastward, and increasing to a gale, Captain M—— determined upon making Cape Clear, on the southern coast of Ireland; but having obtained sights for the chronometers, it was discovered that they were far to the westward of the reckoning, and had no chance of making the point of land which they had intended. For many days they had to contend against strong easterly gales, with a heavy sea, and had sought shelter under the western coast of Ireland.

The weather moderating, and the wind veering again to the southward, the frigate's head was put towards the shore, that they might take a fresh departure; but scarcely had they time to congratulate themselves upon the prospect of soon gaining a port, when there was every appearance of another gale coming on from the south-west. As this was from a quarter which, in all probability, would scarcely allow the frigate to weather Mizen-head, she was hauled off on the larboard tack, and all sail put on her which prudence would permit in the heavy cross sea, which had not yet subsided.

"We shall have it all back again, I am afraid, sir," observed the master, looking to windward at the horizon, which, black as pitch, served as a background to relieve the white curling tops of the seas. "Shall we have the trysails up, and bend them?"

"The boatswain is down after them now, Pearce," said the first lieutenant.

"The weather is indeed threatening," replied the captain, as he turned from the weather gangway, where he had been standing, and wiped the spray from his face, with which the atmosphere was charged; "and I perceive that the glass is very low. Send the small sails down out of the tops; as soon as the staysail is on her, lower the gaff, and furl the spanker; the watch will do. When we go to quarters, we'll double-breech the guns. Let the carpenter have his tarpaulins ready for battening down—send for the boatswain, and let the boats on the booms be well secured. Is that eight bells striking? Then pipe to supper first; and, Mr Hardy," added Captain M——, as he descended the companion ladder, "they may as well hook the rolling-tackles again."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Hardy, as the captain disappeared.

"I say, master, the skipper don't like it—I'll swear that, by his look as he turned from the gangway. He was as stern as the figure-head of the Mars."

"That's just his way; if even the elements threaten him, he returns the look of defiance."

"He does so," replied the master, who appeared to be unusually grave, as if in sad presentiment of evil. "I've watched him often.—But it's no use—they mind but one."

"Very true—neither can you conciliate them by smiling; the only way to look is *to look sharp out*. Eh, master!" said the first lieutenant, slapping him familiarly on the back.

"Come, no skylarking, Hardy—it's easy to tell the skipper isn't on deck. I expect as much sleep to-night as a dog-vane—these south-westers generally last their three days."

"I am glad to hear that," said Merrick, a youngster, with an oval laughing face, who, being a favourite with both the officers, had ventured to the weather-side of the quarter-deck in the absence of the captain.

"And why, Mr Merrick?" inquired the master, gravely.

"Oh! it's my morning watch to-morrow. We shall be all snug; no sails to trim, no sails to set, and no holy-stoning the deck—nothing to do but to keep myself warm under the weather bulwarks."

"Ah, you idle scamp," said the first lieutenant, smiling.

"So, young man, you wish us to be on deck all night, that you may have nothing to do in the morning. The day will come when you will know what responsibility is," retorted Pearce.

"If you're up all night, sir," replied the boy, laughing, "you'll want a cup of coffee in the morning watch. I shall come in for my share of that, you know."

"Ah, well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good," observed Pearce, "but you are young to be selfish."

"Indeed I am not selfish, sir," replied the boy, hurt at the rebuke from one who had been kind to him, and to whom he was attached. "I was only joking. I only meant," continued he, feeling deeply, but not at the moment able to describe his feelings—"I only said—oh! d— the coffee."

"And now you're *only* swearing, I suppose," replied the master.

"Well, it's enough to make a saint swear to be accused of being selfish, and by you too."

"Well, well, youngster, there's enough of it—you spoke without thinking. Go down to your tea now, and you shall have your share of the coffee to-morrow, if there is any."

After supper the watch was called, and the directions given by the captain to the first lieutenant were punctually obeyed. The drum then beat to quarters earlier than usual; the guns were doubly secured; the dead-lights shipped abaft; the number of inches of water in the well made known by the carpenter; the sobriety of the men ascertained by the officers stationed at their respective guns; and everything that was ordered to be executed, or to be held in readiness, in the several departments, reported to the captain.

"Now, Mr Hardy, we'll make her all snug for the night. Furl the fore and mizen-topsail, and close-reef the main—that, with the foresail, fore-staysail, and trysail, will be enough for her."

"Had we not better reef the foresail, sir?" said Pearce. "I suspect we shall have to do it before twelve o'clock, if we do not now."

"Very right, Mr Pearce—we will do so. Is the main-trysail bent?"

"All bent, sir, and the sheet aft."

"Then beat a retreat, and turn the hands up—shorten sail."

This duty was performed, and the hammocks piped down as the last glimmering of daylight disappeared.

The gale increased rapidly during the first watch. Large drops of rain mingled with the spray, distant thunder rolled to windward, and occasional gleams of lightning pierced through the intense darkness of the night. The officers and men of the watches below, with sealed eyes and thoughtless hearts, were in their hammocks, trusting to those on deck for security. But the night was terrific, and the captain, first lieutenant, and master, from the responsibility of their situations, continued on deck, as did many of the officers termed idlers, such as the surgeon and purser, who, although their presence was not required, felt no inclination to sleep.

By four o'clock in the morning the gale was at its height. The lightning darted through the sky in every direction, and the thunder-claps for the time overpowered the noise of the wind as it roared through the shrouds. The sea, striking on the fore-channels, was thrown aft with violence over the quarter-deck and waist of the ship, as she laboured through the agitated sea.

"If this lasts much longer we must take the foresail off of her, and give her the main-staysail," said Hardy to the master.

"We must, indeed," replied the captain, who was standing by them; "but the day is breaking. Let us wait a little—ease her, quarter-master."

"Ease her it is, sir."

At daylight, the gale having rather increased than shown any symptoms of abating, the captain was giving directions for the foresail to be taken off, when the seaman who was stationed to look out on the lee-gangway, cried out, "A sail on the lee-beam!"

"A sail on the lee-beam, sir!" reported the officer of the watch to the captain, as he held on by a rope with one hand, and touched his hat with the other.

"Here youngster, tell the sentry at the cabin door to give you my deck glass," said Captain M—— to Merrick, who was one of the midshipmen of the morning watch.

"She's a large ship, sir—main and mizen masts both gone," reported Hardy, who had mounted up three or four ratlines of the main-rigging.

The midshipman brought up the glass; and the captain, first passing his arm round the fore-brace, to secure himself from falling to leeward with the lurching of the ship, as soon as he could bring the strange vessel into the field of the glass (no easy task under such circumstances, except to the practised eye of a sailor), exclaimed, "A line-of-battle-ship, by Heavens! and if I am any judge of a hull, or the painting of a ship, she is no Englishman."

Other glasses were now produced, and the opinion of the captain was corroborated by that of the officers on deck.

"Keep fast the foresail, Mr Hardy. We'll edge down to her. Quarter-master, see the signal halyards all clear."

The captain went down to his cabin, while the frigate was kept away as he directed, the master standing at the conn. He soon came up again: "Hoist No. 3 at the fore, and No. 8 at the main. We'll see if she can answer the private signal."

It was done, and the frigate, rolling heavily in the trough of the sea, and impelled by the furious elements, rapidly closed with the stranger.

In less than an hour they were within half a mile of her; but the private signal remained unanswered.

"Now then bring her to the wind, Mr Pearce," said Captain M———, who had his glass upon the vessel.

The frigate was luffed handsomely to the wind, not however without shipping a heavy sea. The gale, which, during the time that she was kept away before the wind, had the appearance, which it always has, of having decreased in force, now that she presented her broadside to it, roared again in all its fury.

"Call the gunner—clear away the long gun forward—try with the rammer whether the shot has started from the cartridge, and then fire across the bows of that vessel."

The men cast loose the gun, and the gunner taking out the bed and coin, to obtain the greatest elevation to counteract the heel of the frigate, watched the lurch, and pitched the shot close to the forefoot of the disabled vessel, who immediately showed French colours over her weather-quarter.

"French colours, sir!" cried two or three at a breath.

"Beat to quarters, Mr Hardy," said Captain M——.

"Shall we cast loose the main-deck guns?"

"No, no—that will be useless; we shall not be able to fire them, and we may have them through the sides. We'll try her with the carronades."

It was easy to perceive, without the assistance of a glass, that the men on board the French line-of-battle ship were attempting, in no very scientific manner, to get a jury-mast up abaft, that, by putting aftersail on her, they might keep their vessel to the wind. The foresail they dared not take off, as, without any sail to keep her steady, the remaining mast would in all probability have rolled over the side; but without aftersail, the ship would not keep to the wind, and the consequence was, that she was two points off the wind, forging fast through the water, notwithstanding that the helm was hard a-lee.

"Where are we now, Mr Pearce?" interrogated the captain—"about eight or nine leagues from the land?"

"Say seven leagues, sir, if you please," replied the master, "until I can give you an exact answer," and he descended the companion-ladder to work up his reckoning.

"She's leaving us, Mr Hardy—keep more away, and run abreast of her. Now, my lads, watch the weather roll, round and grape—don't throw a shot away—aim at the quarter-deck ports. If we can prevent her from getting up her jury-masts, she is done for."

"As for the matter of that," said the quarter-master, who was captain of one of the quarter-deck guns, "we might save our shot. They hav'n't *nouse* enough to get them up if left all to themselves—however, here's a slap at her."

The frigate nad now closed within three cables' length of the line-of-battle ship, and considering the extreme difficulty of hitting any mark under such disadvantages, a well directed fire was thrown in by her disciplined seamen.

The enemy attempted to return the fire from the weather main-deck guns, but it was a service of such difficulty and danger, that he more than once abandoned it. Two or three guns disappearing from the ports, proved that they had either rolled to leeward, or had been precipitated down the hatchways. This was indeed the case, and the French sailors were so much alarmed from the serious disasters that had already ensued, that they either quitted their quarters, or, afraid to stand behind the guns when they were fired, no aim was taken, and the shots were thrown away. Had the two ships been equally manned, the disadvantage, under all the misfortunes of the Frenchman, would have been on the side of the frigate; but the gale itself was more than sufficient employment for the undisciplined crew of the line-of-battle ship. The fire from the frigate was kept up with vigour, although the vessel lurched so heavily as often to throw the men who were stationed at the guns into the lee scuppers, rolling one over the other in the water with which the decks were floated; but this was only a subject of merriment, and they resumed their task with the careless spirit of British seamen. The fire, difficult as it was to take any precise aim, had the effect intended, that of preventing the French vessel from rigging anything like a jury-mast. Occasionally the line-of-battle ship kept more away, to avoid the grape, by increasing her distance; but the frigate's course was regulated by that of her opponent, and she continued her galling pursuit.

Chapter LII

> Heaven's loud artillery began to play,
> And wrath divine in dreadful peals convey;
> Darkness and raging winds their terrors join,
> And storms of rain with storms of fire combine.
> Some run ashore upon the shoaly land.
>
> Blackmore.

It was no time for man to war against man. The powers of heaven were loose, and in all their fury. The wind howled, the sea raged, the thunder stunned, and the lightning blinded. The Eternal was present, in all His majesty; yet pigmy mortals were contending. But Captain M—— was unmoved, unawed, unchecked; and the men, stimulated by his example, and careless of every thing, heeded not the warning of the elements.

"Sit on your powder-box, and keep it dry, you young monkey," said the quarter-master, who was captain of the gun, to the lad who had the cartridge ready for reloading it. The fire upon the French vessel was warmly kept up, when the master again came on deck, and stated to the captain, that they could not be more than four leagues from a dead lee-shore, which, by keeping away after the French vessel, they must be nearing fast.

"She cannot stand this long, sir. Look to windward—the gale increases—there is a fresh hand at the 'bellows.'"

The wind now redoubled its fury, and the rain, that took a horizontal, instead of a perpendicular direction, from the force of the wind, fed the gale instead of lulling it. The thunder rolled—and the frigate was so drenched with water, that the guns were primed and reprimed, without the fire communicating to the powder, which in a few seconds was saturated with the rain and spray. This was but of little consequence, as the squall and torrents of rain had now hid the enemy from their sight. "Look out for her, my men, as soon as the squall passes over," cried Captain M——.

A flash of lightning, that blinded them for a time, was followed by a peal of thunder, so close, that the timbers of the ship trembled with the vibration of the air. A second hostile meeting of electricity took place, and the fluid darted down the side of the frigate's mainmast, passing through the quarter-deck in the direction of the powder-magazine. Captain M——, the first lieutenant, master, and fifty or sixty of the men, were struck down by the violence of the shock. Many were killed, more wounded, and the rest, blinded and stunned, staggered, and fell to leeward with the lurching of the vessel.

Gradually, those who were only stunned recovered their legs, and amongst the first was the captain of the frigate. As soon as he could recall his scattered senses, with his usual presence of mind he desired "the fire roll" to be beat by the drummer, and sent down to ascertain the extent of the mischief. A strong sulphureous smell pervaded the ship, and flew up the hatchways; and such was the confusion, that some minutes elapsed before any report could be made. It appeared, that the electric fluid had passed close to the spirit-room and after-magazine, and escaped through the bottom of the vessel. Before the report had been made, the captain had given directions for taking the wounded down to the surgeon, and the bodies of the dead under the half-deck. The electric matter had divided at the foot of the mainmast, to which it had done no injury—one part, as before mentioned, having gone below, while the other, striking the iron bolt that connected the lower part of the main-bitts, had thence passed to the two foremast quarter-deck carronades, firing them both off at the same moment that it killed and wounded the men who were stationed at them. The effects of the lightning were various. The men who were close to the foot of the mainmast, holding on by the ropes belayed to the main-bitts, were burnt to a cinder, and their blackened corpses lay smoking in the remnants of their clothes, emitting an overpowering ammoniacal stench. Some were only wounded in the arm or leg; but the scathed member was shrivelled up, and they were borne down the hatchway, howling with intolerable pain. The most awful effects were at the guns. The captains of the two carronades, and several men that were near them, were dead—but had not the equipoise of the bodies been lost by the violent motion of the ship, their dreadful fate would not have been immediately perceived. Not an injury appeared—every muscle was fixed to the same position as when the fluid entered—the same expression of countenance, the same energy of character, the eye like life, as it watched the sight on the gun, the body bent forward, the arm extended, the fingers still holding the lanyard attached to the lock. Nothing but palpable evidence could convince one that they were dead.

The boy attending with his powder-box, upon which he had sat by the directions of the captain of the gun, was desired by Captain M—— to jump up and assist the men in carrying down the wounded. He sat still on his box, supported between the capstan and the stanchions of the companion hatchway, his eye apparently fixed upon the captain, but not moving in obedience to the order, although repeated in an angry tone—He was dead!

During the confusion and panic attending this catastrophe, the guns had been deserted. As soon as the wounded men had been taken below, the captain desired the boatswain to pipe to quarters, for the drummer, when called to beat the "fire roll" had, with others, been summoned to his last account. The guns were again manned, and the firing recommenced; but a want of energy, and the melancholy silence which prevailed, evidently showed that the men, although they obeyed, did not obey cheerfully.

"Another pull of the fore-staysail, Mr Hardsett," cried Captain M——, through his speaking-trumpet.

"Ay, ay, sir; clap on him, my lads," replied the boatswain, holding his call between his teeth, as he lent the assistance of his powerful frame to the exertions of the men. The sheet was aft, and belayed, and the boatswain indulged in muttered quotations from the Scriptures:—"He bringeth forth the clouds from the ends of the world, and sendeth forth lightnings, with rain; bringing the winds out of his treasures. He smote the first-born of Egypt."

The first lieutenant and master were in close consultation to windward. The captain stood at the lee-gangway, occasionally desiring the quarter-master at the conn to alter the course, regulating his own by that of his disabled enemy.

"I'll speak to him, then," exclaimed Pearce, as the conference broke up, and he went over to leeward to the captain.

"Captain M——, I have had the honour to serve under your command some time, and I trust you will allow that I have never shown any want of zeal in the discharge of my duty?"

"No, Mr Pearce," replied the captain, with a grave smile; "without compliment, you never have."

"Then, sir, you will not be affronted at, or ascribe to unworthy motives, a remark which I wish to make."

"Most certainly not; as I am persuaded that you will never make any observation inconsistent with your duty, or infringing upon the rules of the service."

"Then, sir, with all due submission to you, I do think, and it is the opinion of the other officers as well, that our present employment, under existing circumstances, is tempting, if not insulting, the Almighty. Look at the sky, look at the raging sea, hear the wind, and call to mind the effects of the lightning not one half-hour since. When the Almighty appears in all His wrath, in all His tremendous majesty, is it a time for us poor mortals to be at strife? What is our feeble artillery, what is the roar of our cannon, compared to the withering and consuming artillery of Heaven! Has He not told us so?—and do not the ship's company, by their dispirited conduct since the vessel was struck, acknowledge it? The officers all feel it, sir. Is it not presumptuous,—with all due submission, sir, is it not wicked?"

"I respect your feelings as a Christian, and as a man," replied Captain M——; "but I must differ with you. That the Almighty power appears, I grant; and I feel, as you do, that God is great, and man weak and impotent. But that this storm has been raised—that this thunder rolls—that this lightning has blasted us, as a *warning*, I deny. The causes emanate from the Almighty; but He leaves the effects to the arrangements of Nature, which is governed by immutable laws. Had there been no other vessel in sight, this lightning would still have struck us; and this storm will not cease, even if we were to neglect what I consider a duty to our country."

The master touched his hat, and made no answer. It was now about one o'clock, and the horizon to leeward, clearing up a little, showed the land upon the lee-beam.

"Land ho!" cried one of the men.

"Indeed," observed the captain to the master—"we are nearer than you thought."

"Something, sir, perhaps; but recollect how many hours you have kept away after this vessel."

"Very true," rejoined the captain; "and the in-draught into the bargain. I am not surprised at it."

"Shall we haul our wind, sir? we are on a dead lee-shore."

"No, Mr Pearce, not until the fate of that vessel is decided."

"Land on the weather-bow!" reported the boatswain from the forecastle.

"Indeed!" said the captain,—"then the affair will soon be decided."

The vessels still continued their course in a slanting direction towards the land, pursuer and pursued running on to destruction; but although various indirect hints were given by the first lieutenant and others, Captain M—— turned a deaf ear. He surveyed the dangers which presented themselves, and frowned upon them, as if in defiance.

Chapter LIII

An universal cry resounds aloud,
The sailors run in heaps, a helpless crowd;
Art fails, and courage falls; no succour near;
As many waves, as many deaths appear.
Ovid. *Dryden's Translation.*

However we may be inclined to extend our admiration to the feelings of self-devotion which governed the conduct of Captain M——, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the officers of the frigate did not coincide with his total indifference to self, in the discharge of his duty. Murmur they did not; but they looked at each other, at the captain, and at the perilous situation of the vessel, in silence, and with a restless change of position that indicated their anxiety. Macallan was below attending to the wounded men, or he would probably have been deputed by the others to have remonstrated with the captain. A few minutes more had elapsed, when the master again addressed him.

"I am afraid, sir, if we continue to stand on, that we shall lose the frigate," said he, respectfully touching his hat.

"Be it so," replied Captain M——; "the enemy will lose a line-of-battle ship; our country will be the gainer, when the account is balanced."

"I must be permitted to doubt that, sir; the value of the enemy's ship is certainly greater; but there are other considerations."

"What are they?"

"The value of the respective officers and ships' companies, which must inevitably share the fate of the two vessels. The captain of that ship is not *worth his salt*. It would be politic to let him live, and continue to command. His ship will always be ours, when we want it; and in the event of a general action, he would make a gap in the enemy's line, which might prove of the greatest importance. Now, sir, without drawing the parallel any further,—without taking into consideration the value of the respective officers and men,—I must take the liberty of observing, that, on your account alone, England will be no gainer by the loss of both vessels and crews."

"Thank you for the compliment, which, as it is only feather weight, I will allow to be thrown into the scale. But I do not agree with you. I consider war but as a game of chess, and will never hesitate to sacrifice a *knight* for a *castle*. Provided that *castle* is lost, Mr Pearce," continued the captain, pointing to the French vessel—"this little frigate, if necessary, shall be *knight-errant* enough to bear her company."

"Very good, sir," replied Pearce, again touching his hat; "as master of this ship, I considered it my duty to state my opinion."

"You have done your duty, Mr Pearce, and I thank you for it; but I have also my duties to perform. One of them (according to my ideas of the service) is, not to allow the lives of one ship's company, however brave and well disciplined (and such I must allow to be the one I have the honour to command), to interfere with the general interests of the country we contend for. When a man enters his Majesty's service, his life is no longer to be considered his own; it belongs to his king and country, and is at their disposal. If we are lost, there will be no great difficulty in collecting another ship's company in old England, as brave and as good as this. Officers as experienced are anxiously waiting for employment; and (notwithstanding your compliment, Mr Pearce) the Admiralty will have no trouble in selecting and appointing as good, if not a better captain."

The contending ships were now about two cables' length from each other, with a high rocky coast, lashed with a tremendous surf, about three-quarters of a mile to leeward. The promontory extended about two points on the weather-bow of the frigate, and a low sandy tongue of land spread itself far out on her weather-quarter, so that both vessels were completely embayed. The line-of-battle ship again made an attempt to get up some aftersail: but the well-directed fire of the frigate, whenever she rose on the tops of the mountainous waves, which at intervals hid the hulls of both vessels from each other, drove the Frenchmen from their task of safety, and it was now evident that all command of her was lost. She rolled gunwale under, and her remaining mast went by the board.

"Nothing can save her now, sir," replied the master.

"No," replied the captain. "We have done our work, and must now try to save ourselves."

"Secure the guns—be smart, my lads, you work for your lives. We must put the mainsail on her, Mr Pearce, and claw off if we can."

The master shook his head. "Hands by the clue-garnets and buntlines—man the mainsheet—let go those leech-lines, youngster—haul aboard."

"It's a pity too, by G—d," said the captain, looking over the hammock-rails at the French vessel, which was now running before the wind right on to the shore, dragging the wreck of her masts on each side of her—"Eight or nine hundred poor devils will be called to their last account in the course of a few minutes. I wish we could save them."

"You should have thought of that before, sir," said the master, with a grave smile at this reaction of feeling on the part of the captain. "Nothing can save them, and I am afraid that nothing but a slant of wind or a miracle can help ourselves."

"She has struck, sir, and is over on her broadside," said the quarter-master, who was standing on the carronade slide.

"Mind your conn, sir: keep your eyes on the weather leech of the sail, and not upon that ship," answered the captain with asperity.

In the meantime, the mainsail had been set by the first lieutenant, and the crew, unoccupied, had their eyes directed for a little while upon the French vessel, which lay on her beam-ends, enveloped in spray; but they also perceived what, during the occupation and anxiety of action, they had not had leisure to attend to, namely, the desperate situation of their own ship. The promontory was now broad on the weather-bow, and a reef of rocks, partly above water, extended from it to leeward of the frigate. Such was the anxiety of the ship's company for their own safety that the eyes of the men were turned away from the stranded vessel, and fixed upon the rocks;

and the dreadful fate of the enemy was quite unheeded, being absorbed in that impending over themselves. The frigate did all that a gallant vessel could do, rising from the trough of the sea, and shaking the water from her, as she was occasionally buried forecastle under, from the great pressure of the sail, cleaving the huge masses of the element with her sharp stem, and trembling fore and aft with the violence of her own exertions. But the mountainous waves took her with irresistible force from her chess-tree, retarding her velocity, and forcing her each moment nearer to the reef.

"Wear ship, Mr Hardy," said the captain, who had not spoken one word since he rebuked the quarter-master—"we have but just room."

The master directed the man at the wheel to put helm up, in a firm but subdued tone, for he was at that moment thinking of his wife and children.

The ship had just paid off and gathered fresh way, when she struck upon a sunken rock. A loud and piercing cry from the ship's company, who ran aft, was followed by an enormous sea striking the frigate on the counter, at once heeling her over and forcing her ahead, so that she slipped off from the rock again into deep water.

"She's off again, sir," said the master.

"It's God mercy, Mr Pearce! Bring her to the wind as soon as you can," replied the captain, with composure, But the carpenter now ran up the hatchway, and, with a pallid face and hurried tone, declared that the ship was filling fast, and could not be kept afloat more than a few minutes.

"Going down!—going down!" was spread with dreadful rapidity throughout the ship, and all discipline and subordination appeared to be at an end.

Some of the men flew to the boats hoisted up on the quarters, and were casting loose the ropes which secured them, with hands that were tremulous with anxiety and fear.

"Silence there, fore and aft!" roared the captain, in the full compass of his powerful voice. "Every man to his station. Come out of those boats directly."

All obeyed, except one man, who still continued to cast loose the gripes.

"Come out, sir," repeated the captain.

"Not I, by G—d!" repeated the sailor, coolly.

The boarding-pikes, which had been lashed round the spanker-boom, had been detached, either from the shot of the enemy, or some other means, and were lying on the deck, close to the cabin skylight. The captain seizing one, and poising it brandished over his head, a third time ordered the sailor to leave the boat.

"Every man for himself, and God for us all!" was the cool answer of the refractory seaman.

The pike flew, and entered the man's bowels up to the hilt. The poor wretch staggered, made a snatch at the davit, missed it, and fell backwards over the gunwale of the boat into the sea.

"My lads," said Captain M——, emphatically addressing the men, who beheld the scene with dismay, "as long as one plank, ay, one *toothpick*, of this vessel swims, I command, and will be obeyed. Quarter-master, put the helm up. I have but few words to say to you, my men. The vessel is sinking, and we must put her on the reef—boats are useless. If she hangs together, do you hang to her as your only chance. And now farewell, my brave fellows, for we are not all likely to meet again. Look out for a soft place for her, Mr Pearce, if you can."

"I see but one spot where there is the least chance of her being thrown up, sir. Starboard a little—steady!—so"—were the cool directions of the master, as the ship flew with increased velocity to her doom. The captain stood on the carronade slide, from which he had addressed the men. His mien was firm and erect—not a muscle of his countenance was observed to change or move, as the sailors watched it, as the barometer of their fate. Awed by the dreadful punishment of the mutineer, and restrained by their long habits of discipline, they awaited their doom in a state of intense anxiety, but in silence.

All this latter description, however, was but the event of about two minutes—which had barely expired, when the frigate dashed upon the reef!

Chapter LIV

Thou, God of this great vast, rebuke those surges which wash both heaven and hell; and thou that hast upon the winds command, bind them in brass, having called them from the deep.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE shock threw the men off their feet as they raised an appealing cry to Heaven, which was mocked by the howling of the wind, and the roar of the waters. The masts, which were thrown out from their steps, waved once, twice, and then fell over the sides with a crash, as an enormous sea broke over the vessel, forcing her further on the rock, and causing every timber and knee in her to start from its place. The masts, as they fell, and the sea, that at the same moment poured over like an impetuous cataract, swept away thirty or forty of the seamen into the boiling element under the lee. Another and another shock from the resistless and furious waves decided the fate of the resolute captain and master. The frigate parted amidships. The fore part of her, which was firmly wedged on the rocks, remained. The quarter-deck and after-part turned over to the deep water, and disappeared. An enormous surge curled over it as it went down, and, as if disappointed at not being able to wreak its fury upon that part of the vessel, which, by sinking, had evaded it, it drove in revenge upon the remainder, forcing it several yards higher upon the reef.

Two-thirds of the ship's company were now gone,—the captain, the master, and the major part of the officers and men, being on the quarter-deck when the ship divided.

The cry of the drowning was not heard amidst the roaring of the elements. The behaviour of the captain and the officers at this dreadful crisis, has not been handed down: but, if we may judge from what has already been narrated, they met their fate like British seamen.

The fore-part of the ship still held together, and, fortunately for the survivors, heeled towards the land, so as to afford some protection from the force of the seas, which dashed over it at each succeeding swell of the billows. Daylight left them, and darkness added to the despair and horror of nearly one hundred wretches, who felt, at each shock, which threatened to separate the planks and timbers, as if death was loudly knocking to claim the residue of his destined victims. Not one word was exchanged; but, secured with ropes to the belaying-pins, and other parts of the forecastle where they could pass their lashings, they clung and huddled together, either absorbed in meditation or wailing with despair. Occasionally, one who had supported himself in a difficult and painful position, stimulated with the faint hopes of life, to which we all so fondly and so foolishly cling, would find that his strength was exhausted, and that he could hold no longer. After vainly imploring those near him to allow him to better his condition by a slight personal sacrifice on their part (an appeal that received no answer), he would gradually loose his hold, and drop into the surge, that was commissioned by death to receive his prey.

There are situations in human life of such powerful excitement, and in which the mechanism of the human frame becomes so rapid in its motion, that the friction of a few days will wear it out. The harrowed feelings of these poor creatures on the wreck, during the short time that they remained, had a greater effect in undermining the constitution than many years of laborious occupation on shore.

Fellow-countrymen, if you are at all interested with the scenes I am now describing, and which, if you have any feeling, you must be (however imperfect the description), let the author, a sailor himself, take this favourable opportunity of appealing to you in behalf of a service at once your protection and your pride. For its sake, as well as your own, listen not to those who, expatiating upon its expense, and silent upon its deserts, would put a stop to hardly-earned promotion, and blast with disappointment the energies of the incipient hero. And may those to whom the people at large have delegated their trust, and in whom they have reposed their confidence, treat with contempt the calculations, and miscalculations, of one without head and without heart!

Daylight again, as if unwillingly, appeared, and the wild scud flew past the dark clouds, that seemed to sink down with their heavy burdens till they nearly touched the sea. The waves still followed each other mountains high: the wind blew with the same violence; and as the stormy petrels flew over the billows, indicating by their presence that the gale would continue, the unfortunate survivors looked at each other in silence and despair.

I know not whether all seamen feel as I do: but I have witnessed so many miraculous escapes, so many sudden reverses, so much, beyond all hope and conception, achieved by a reliance upon Providence and your own exertions, that, under the most critical circumstances, I never should despair. If struggling in the centre of the Atlantic, with no vessel in sight, no strength remaining, and sinking under the wave that boiled in my ear, as memory and life were departing,—still, as long as life *did* remain, as long as recollection held her seat, I never should abandon Hope,—never believe that it is all over with me,—till I awoke in the next world, and found it confirmed.

What would these men have valued their lives at in the morning? Yet at noon a change took place: the weather evidently moderated fast; and silence, that had reigned for so many hours, lost his empire, and the chances of being saved began to be calculated. A reef of rocks, many of them above water, over which the breakers still raged, lay between the wreck and the shore, and the certainty of being dashed to pieces precluded all attempts at reaching it, till the weather became more moderate and the sea less agitated. But when might that be ?—and how long were they to resist the united attacks of hunger and fatigue ?

The number of men still surviving was about seventy. Many, exhausted and wounded, were hanging in a state of insensibility by the ropes with which they had secured themselves. That our hero was among those who remained need hardly be observed, or there would have been a close to this eventful history. He was secured to the weather side of the foremast-bitts, supported on the one side by the boatswain, and on the other by Price, the second lieutenant, next to whom was the captain of the forecastle, one of the steadiest and best seamen in the ship, who had been pressed out of a West Indiaman, in which he had served in the capacity of second mate.

Our hero had often turned round with an intention to speak to Price ; but observing that he sat crouched with his face upon his hands and knees, he waited until his messmate should raise his head up, imagining that he was occupied in secret prayer. Finding that he still continued in the same position, Seymour called to him several times. Not receiving any answer, he extended his arm and shook Price by the collar, fearing that he had swooned from cold and fatigue.

Price slowly raised his head, and looking at Seymour, answered not. His vacant stare and wild eye proclaimed at once that reason had departed. Still, as it afterwards appeared, his ruling passion remained ; and, from that incomprehensible quality of our structure, which proves that the mind of man is more fearfully and wonderfully made than the body, the desertion of one sense was followed by the return of another. His *memory* was perfect, now that his *reason* was gone. Surveying the scene around him, he began, with all the theatrical action which the ropes that secured him would permit, to quote his favourite author :—

"'Blow winds, and crack your cheeks—rage—blow,
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout—'

"'Poor Tom's a-cold'"—then, shuddering, he covered up his face, and resumed his former position.

"Is this a time for spouting profane plays, Mr Price ?" said the fanatical boatswain, who was not aware of the poor man's insanity. "Hold your peace, and call not judgment on our heads, and I prophesy that we shall be saved. 'The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly; but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier.'"

Silence ensued, which, after a few minutes, was interrupted by Seymour, lamenting over the fate of Captain M—— and the rest of the crew who had perished.

"Well, they are in heaven before this, I hope ?" observed Robinson, the captain of the forecastle.

"'Many are called, but few chosen,'" rejoined the boatswain, who appeared, by the flashing of his eye, to be in a state of strong excitement. "No more in heaven than you would be, if the Almighty was pleased to cut you off in His wrath."

"Where then, Mr Hardsett ?" inquired Robinson. "Surely not in——"

"I know—I know"—cried Price, who again lifted up his head, and, with a vacant laugh, commenced singing—

"Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange ;
Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell ;
Hark ! now I hear them—ding-dong-bell."

"For shame, Mr Price !" interrupted the boatswain.

"Ding dong—ding-dong-bell."

"Mr Price, what does the Scripture say ? 'Judgments are prepared for scorners,' " continued the boatswain, with vehemence.

Price had resumed his former attitude, and made no answer. As soon as the interruption of the lieutenant had ceased, Robinson resumed his interrogatory to the boatswain : " Where then ?—not in hell, I hope."

" Ay," returned the latter, " in the fire that is never quenched, and for ever and ever."

" I hope not," replied Robinson; " I may deserve punishment, and I know I do. I've been overhauling my log-book, while the sea here has been dashing over my bows, and washing my figure-head ; and there are some things I wish I could forget ;—they will rise up in judgment against me ; but surely not for ever ? "

" You should have thought of that before, my good fellow. I am sorry for you,—sorry for all of those who have perished, for they were good seamen, and, in the worldly service, have done well. I was reflecting the other day whether, out of the whole navy, I should be able to muster one single ship's company in heaven."

" Well, Mr Hardsett, it's my firm opinion, that when the hands are turned up for punishment in the next world we shall be sarved out according to our desarts. Now, that's my belief; and I shan't change it for yours, Mr Hardsett, for I thinks mine the more comfortable of the two."

" It won't do, Robinson, you must have faith."

" So I have, in God's mercy, boatswain."

" That won't do. Yours is not the true faith."

" Mayhap not, but I hope to ride it out with it nevertheless, for I have it well backed with hope; and if I still drive"—said Robinson, musing a short time—" why, I have charity as a sheet anchor, to bring me up again. It's long odds but our bodies will soon be knocked to shivers in those breakers, and we shall then know who's right, and who's wrong. I see small chance of our saving ourselves, unless indeed we could walk on the sea, and there was but one that ever did that."

"Had the apostle had faith, he would not have sunk," rejoined the boatswain.

"Have you then more faith than the apostle?"

"I have, thanks be to Jehovah, the true faith," cried the boatswain, raising his eyes and hands to heaven.

"Then *walk on shore*," said the captain of the forecastle, looking him steadfastly in the face.

Stimulated by the request, which appeared to put his courage as a man, and his faith as a Christian, to the test, and, at the moment, fanatic even to insanity, the boatswain rose, and casting off the ropes which he had wound round his body, was about to comply with Robinson's request.

A few moments more, and the raging sea would have received him, had not our hero, in conjunction with the captain of the forecastle, held him down with all his power. "We doubt not your faith, Mr Hardsett," said Seymour, "but the time of miracles is past. It would be self-murder. He who raised the storm, will, in His own good time, save us, if He thinks fit."

Price, who had listened to the conversation, and had watched the motions of the boatswain, who was casting off the lashings which had secured him, had, unperceived, done the same, and now jumped upon his legs, and collared the astonished boatswain, roaring out—

"Zounds, show me what thou'lt do!
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thyself?"

"Why, he's mad!" exclaimed the terrified boatswain, who was not far off the point himself.

"Mad!" resumed Price.

"Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and play'd
Some tricks of desperation.
The king's son Ferdinand,
With hair upstaring (then like reeds, not hair),
Was the first man that leaped; cried, Hell is empty,
And all the devils are here!"

As the maniac finished the last words, before they could be aware of his intention, he made a spring from the deck over the bulwark, and disappeared under the wave. The boatswain, who had been diverted from his fanatical attempt by the unexpected attack of Price, more than by the remonstrances of his companions, resumed his position, folding his arms, and casting his eyes to heaven. The captain of the forecastle was silent, and so was our hero—the thoughts of the two were upon the same subject—eternity.

Eternity!—the only theme that confuses, humbles, and alarms the proud intellect of man. What is it? The human mind can grasp any defined space, any defined time, however vast; but this is beyond time, and too great for the limited conception of man. It had no beginning, and can have no end. It cannot be multiplied, it cannot be divided, it cannot be added unto—you may attempt to subtract from it, but it is useless. Take millions and millions of years from it, take all time that can enter into the compass of your imagination, it is still whole and undiminished as before — all calculation is lost. Think on — the brain becomes heated, and oppressed with a sensation of weight too powerful for it to bear; reason totters in her seat, and you rise with the conviction of the impossibility of the creature attempting to fathom the Creator—humiliated with the sense of your own nothingness, and impressed with the tremendous majesty of the Deity.

Time is Man—Eternity is God!

Chapter LV

Thou art perfect, then, that our ship hath touched upon the deserts of Bohemia.
Ay, my lord, and fear we have landed in ill time.
Winter's Tale.

About midnight the moon burst through the clouds, which gradually rolled away to the western horizon, as if they had been furled by some invisible spirits in the air. The wind, after several feeble gusts, like the last breathings of some expiring creature unwilling to loosen the "silver cord," subsided to a calm. It then shifted round to the eastward. The waves relaxed in their force until they did little more than play upon the side of the wreck, so lately the object of their fury. The dark shadows of the rocks were no longer relieved by the white foam of the surf, which had raged among them with such violence.

Before morning all was calm, and the survivors, as they shrunk and shivered in their wet garments, encouraged each other with the prospect of a speedy termination to their sufferings on the re-appearance of daylight. The sun rose in splendour, and seemed, as he darted his searching rays through the cloudless expanse, to exclaim in his pride, "Behold how I bring light and heat, joy and salvation, to you, late despairing creatures!" The rocks of the reef above water, which had previously been a source of horror, and had been contemplated as the sure engines of their destruction, were now joyfully reckoned as so many resting spots for those who were about to attempt to reach the land.

The most daring and expert swimmers launched themselves into the water, and made for the nearest cluster of rocks, with difficulty gaining a footing on them, after clinging by the dark and slippery sea-weed which covered their tops, like shaggy hair on the heads of so many emerging giants.

The waving of the hands of the party who had succeeded in gaining the rocks, encouraged a second to follow; while others, who could not swim, were busily employed in searching for the means of supporting themselves in the water, and floating themselves on shore.

Self, that had predominated, now lost its ground. Those who had allowed their shipmates to perish in attempting to gain the same place of security as themselves, without an effort in their favour, or one sigh for their unlucky fate, now that hope was revived almost to a certainty of deliverance, showed as much interest in the preservation of others lying in a state of exhaustion, as they did for their own. The remaining officers recovered their authority, which had been disregarded, and the shattered fragments of the *Aspasia* reassumed its rights of discipline and obedience to the last.

In a few hours, sick, disabled, and wounded were all safely landed, and the raft which had been constructed returned to the wreck, to bring on shore whatever might be useful.

Our hero, who was the only officer who had been saved, with the exception of the boatswain, to whom he was senior in rank, had taken upon himself the command, and occupied himself with the arrangements necessary for the shelter and sustenance of his men. A range of barren hills, abruptly rising from the iron-bound coast, covered with large fragments and detached pieces of rock, without any symptom of cultivation, or any domesticated animal in sight, which might imply that human aid was not far distant, met the eye of Seymour, as he directed it to every point, in hopes of succour for his wounded and exhausted companions. One of the men, whom he had sent to reconnoitre, returned in a few minutes, stating, that behind a jutting rock, which he pointed to with his finger, not two hundred yards distant, he had discovered a hut, or what in Ireland is termed a shealing, and that there appeared to be a bridle road from it leading over the mountain. To this shelter our hero determined to remove his disabled men, and, in company with the boatswain and the man who had returned with the intelligence, set off to examine the spot. Passing the rock, he perceived that the hut, which bore every sign, from its smokeless chimney and air of negligence and decay, to have been some time deserted, stood upon a piece of ground, about an acre in extent, which had once been cultivated, but now was luxuriant with a spontaneous crop of weeds and thistles. He approached the entrance, and as the rude door creaked upon its hinges when he threw it open, was saluted by a faint voice, which cried, "*Qui va là?*"

"Why, there's Irishmen inside," observed the sailor.

"Frenchmen rather, I should imagine," replied our hero, as he entered and discovered seven or eight of the unfortunate survivors of the French line-of-battle ship, who had crawled there, bruised, cut, and apparently in the last state of exhaustion.

"*Bonjour, camarade,*" said one of them, with difficulty raising himself on his elbow—"*As-tu de l'eau-de-vie?*"

"I am afraid not," replied Seymour, looking with compassion on the group, all of which had their eyes directed towards him, although, from their wounds and bruises, they were not able to turn their bodies. "We are shipwrecked, as well as you."

"What! did you belong to that cursed frigate?"

"We did," replied Seymour, "and there are but few of us alive to tell the tale."

"*Vive la France!*" cried the Frenchman; "*puisqu'elle n'est pas échappée—je n'ai plus de regrets.*"

"*Vivat, vivat!*" repeated the rest of the French party, in faint accents.

"*Et moi, je meurs content!*" murmured one, who, in a few seconds afterwards, expired.

"Are you the only survivors?" demanded Seymour.

"All that are left," replied the spokesman of the party, "out of eight hundred and fifty men—*Sacristie—as-tu de l'eau-de-vie?*"

"I hardly know what we have—something has been saved from the wreck," replied Seymour, "and shall cheerfully be shared with you, with all the assistance we can afford. We were enemies, but we are now brothers in affliction. I must quit you to bring up our wounded men; there is sufficient room, I perceive, for all of us. *Adieu, pour le moment!*"

"*Savez-vous que c'est un brave garçon, ce lieutenant-là?*"

observed the Frenchman to his companions, as Seymour and his party quitted the hut.

Seymour returned to the beach, and, collecting his men, found the survivors to consist of forty-four seamen and marines, the boatswain, and himself. Of these fifteen were helpless, from wounds and fractured limbs. The articles which had been collected were a variety of spars and fragments of wood, some of the small sails which had been triced up in the rigging, one or two casks of beef and pork, and a puncheon of rum, which had miraculously steered its course between the breakers, and had been landed without injury. The sails which had been spread out to dry, were first carried up to form a bed for the sick and wounded, who, in the space of an hour, were all made as comfortable as circumstances would admit, a general bed having been made on the floor of the hut, upon which they and the wounded Frenchmen shared the sails between them. The spars and fragments were then brought up, and a fire made in the long deserted hearth, while another was lighted outside for the men to dry their clothes. The cask of rum was rolled up to the door, and a portion, mixed with the water from a rill that trickled down the sides of the adjacent mountain, served out to the exhausted parties. The seamen, stripping off their clothes, and spreading them out to dry before the fire which had been made outside, collected into the hut to shield their naked bodies from the inclemency of the weather.

The spirits, which had been supplied with caution to the survivors of the French vessel, had been eagerly seized by the one who had first addressed our hero, and in half an hour he seemed to be quite revived. He rose, and after trying his limbs, by moving slowly to and fro, gradually recovered the entire use of them—and by the time that the circulation of his blood had been thoroughly restored by a second dose of spirits, appeared to have little to complain of. He was a powerful, well-looking man, with a large head, covered with a profusion of shaggy hair. Seymour looked at him earnestly, and thought he could not well be mistaken, long as it was since they had been in company.

"Excuse me—but I think we once met at Cherbourg. Is not your name Debriseau?"

"*Sacristie!*" replied the Frenchman, seizing himself by the hair, "*je suis connu!* And who are you?"

"Oh! now I'm sure it's you," replied Seymour, laughing—"that's your old trick—do you not recollect the boy that Captain M'Elvina took off the wreck?"

"*Ah, mon ami*—Seymour, I believe—midshipman, I believe," cried Debriseau, "*Est-ce donc vous? Mais, mon Dieu, que c'est drôle!*" (again pulling his hair as he grinded his teeth), "*une diable de rencontre!*"

"And how is it that you have been on board of a French man-of-war?"

"How! oh, I was unlucky after M'Elvina went away, and I thought, on reflection, notwithstanding his arguments, that it was a dishonest sort of concern. Being pretty well acquainted with the coast, I shipped on board as pilot."

"But, Debriseau, are you not a native of Guernsey, which is part of the British dominions?"

"Bah! it's all one, *mon ami;* we islanders are like the bat in the fable—beast or bird, as it suits us—we belong to either country. For my part, I have a strong national affection for *both*."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the boatswain, who had remained outside, in charge of the cask of rum, upon which he had seated himself, occupied with his Bible. "Here's assistance coming, Mr Seymour. There's at least twenty or thirty men descending the hill."

"Hurrah for old Ireland! they are the boys that will look after a friend in distress," shouted Conolly, one of the seamen, who thus eulogised his own countrymen as he hung naked over the fire.

Chapter LVI

With dauntless hardihood
And brandish'd blade rush on him,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
* * though he and his cursed crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high.
MILTON.

THE information received from Mr Hardsett induced our hero to break off his conversation with Debriseau, and he immediately quitted the hut. A party of men, wild in their appearance and demeanour, were bounding down through the rocks, flourishing their bludgeons over their heads, with loud shouts. They soon arrived within a few yards of the shealing, and, to the astonishment of Seymour and the boatswain, who, with a dozen more, had resumed their clothes, seemed to eye them with hostile, rather than with friendly glances. Their intentions were, however, soon manifested by their pouncing upon the habiliments of the seamen, which were spread out to dry, holding them rolled up under one arm, while they flourished their shillelahs in defiance with the other.

"Avast there, my lads!" cried the boatswain; "why are you meddling with those clothes?"

A shout, with confused answers in Irish, was the incomprehensible reply.

"Conolly," cried Seymour, "you can speak to them. Ask them what they mean."

Conolly addressed them in Irish, when an exchange of a few sentences took place.

"Bloody end to the rapparees!" said Conolly, turning to our hero. "It's helping themselves they're a'ter, instead of helping us. They say that all that comes on shore from a wreck is their own by right, and that they'll have it. They asked me what was in the cask, and I told them it was the cratur, sure enough, and they say that they must have it, and everything else, and that if we don't give it up peaceably, they'll take the lives of us."

Seymour, who was aware that the surrender of the means of intoxication would probably lead to worse results, turned to his men, who had assembled outside of the hut, and had armed themselves with spars and fragments of the wreck on the first appearance of hostility, and directed them to roll the cask of rum into the hut, and prepare to act on the defensive. The English seamen indignant at such violation of the laws of hospitality, and at the loss of their clothes, immediately complied with his instructions, and, with their blood boiling, were with difficulty restrained from commencing the attack.

A shaggy-headed monster, apparently the leader of the hostile party, again addressed Conolly in his own language.

"It's to know whether ye'll give up the cask quietly, or have a fight for it. The devil a pair of trousers will they give back, not even my own, though I'm an Irishman, and a Galway man to boot. By J——s, Mr Seymour, it's to be hoped you'll not give up the cratur without a bit of a row."

"No," replied Seymour. "Tell them that they shall not have it, and that they shall be punished for the theft they have already committed."

"You're to come and take it," roared Conolly, in Irish, to the opposing party.

"Now, my lads," cried Seymour, "you must fight hard for it—they will show little mercy, if they gain the day."

The boatswain returned his Bible to his breast, and seizing the mast of the frigate's jolly-boat, which had been thrown up with the other spars, poised it with both hands on a level with his head, so as to use the foot of it as a battering ram, and stalked before his men.

The Irish closed with loud yells, and the affray commenced with a desperation seldom to be witnessed. Many were the wounds given and received, and several of either party were levelled in the dust. The numbers were about even; but the weapons of the Irish were of a better description, each man being provided with his own shillelah of hard wood, which he had been accustomed to wield.

But the boatswain did great execution, as he launched forward his mast, and prostrated an Irishman every time, with his cool and well-directed aim. After a few minutes' contention, the Englishmen were beaten back to the shealing, where they rallied, and continued to stand at bay. Seymour, anxious at all events that the Irish should not obtain the liquor, directed Robinson, the captain of the forecastle, to go into the hut, take the bung out of the cask, and start the contents. This order was obeyed, while the contest was continued outside, till M'Dermot, the leader of the Irish, called off his men, that they might recover their breath for a renewal of the attack.

"If it's the liquor you want," cried Conolly to them, by the direction of Seymour, "you must be quick about it. There it's all running away through the doors of the shealing."

This announcement had, however, the contrary effect to that which Seymour intended it should produce. Enraged at the loss of the spirits, and hoping to gain possession of the cask before it was all out, the Irish returned with renewed violence to the assault, and drove the English to the other side of the shealing, obtaining possession of the door, which they burst into, to secure their prey. About eight or ten had entered, and had seized upon the cask, which was not more than half emptied, when the liquor, which had run out under the door of the hut, communicated, in its course, with the fire that had been kindled outside. With the rapidity of lightning the flame ran up the stream that continued to flow, igniting the whole of the spirits in the cask, which blew up with a tremendous explosion, darting the fiery liquid over the whole interior, and communicating the flame to the thatch, and every part of the building, which was instantaneously in ardent combustion. The shrieks of the poor disabled wretches, stretched on the sails, to which the fire had communicated, and who were now lying in a molten sea of flame like that described in Pandemonium by Milton—the yells of the Irish inside of the hut, vainly attempting to regain the door, as they writhed in their flaming apparel, which, like the shirt of Nessus, ate into their flesh—the burning thatch which had been precipitated in the air, and now descended in fiery flakes upon the parties outside, who stood aghast at the dreadful and unexpected catastrophe,—the volumes of black and suffocating smoke which poured out from every quarter, formed a scene of horror to which no pen can do adequate justice. But all was soon over. The shrieks and yells had yielded to suffocation, and the flames, in their fury, had devoured everything with such rapidity, that they subsided for the want of further aliment. In a few minutes, nothing remained but the smoking walls, and the blackened corpses which they encircled.

Ill-fated wretches! ye had escaped the lightning's blast —ye had been rescued from the swallowing wave—and little thought that you would encounter an enemy more cruel still—your fellow-creature—man.

The first emotions of Seymour and his party, as soon as they had recovered from the horror which been excited by the catastrophe, were those of pity and commiseration; but their reign was short—

"Revenge impatient rose,
And threw his blood-stain'd sword in thunder down."

The smoking ruins formed the altar at which he received their vows, and stimulated them to the sacrifice of further victims.

Nor did he fail to inspire the breasts of the other party, indignant at the loss of their companions, and disappointed at the destruction of what they so ardently coveted.

Debriseau, who had played no idle game in the previous skirmish, was the first who rushed to the attack. Crying out, with all the theatrical air of a Frenchman, which never deserts him, even in the agony of grief, "*Mes braves* *compagnons, vous serez vengés!*" he flew at M'Dermot, the leader of the Irish savages.

A brand of half-consumed wood, with which he aimed at M'Dermot's head, broke across the bludgeon which was raised to ward the blow. Debriseau closed; and, clasping his arms round his neck, tore him with his strong teeth with the power and ferocity of a tiger, and they rolled together in the dust, covered with the blood which poured in streams, and struggling for mastery and life. An American, one of the *Aspasia's* crew, now closed in the same way with another of the Irish desperadoes, and as they fell together, twirling the side-locks on the temples of his antagonist round his fingers to obtain a fulcrum to his lever, he inserted his thumbs into the sockets of his eyes, forced out the balls of vision, and left him in agony and in darkness.

"The sword of the Lord!" roared the boatswain, as he fractured the skull of a third with the mast of the boat, which, with herculean force, he now whirled round his head.

"Fight *Aspasias*, you fight for your lives," cried Seymour, who was everywhere in advance, darting the still burning end of the large spar into the faces of his antagonists, who recoiled with suffocation and pain. It was, indeed, a struggle for life; the rage of each had mounted to delirium. The English sailors, stimulated by the passions of the moment, felt neither pain nor fatigue from their previous sufferings. The want of weapons had been supplied by their clasp-knives, to which the Irish had also resorted, and deadly wounds were given and received.

M'Dermot, the Irish leader, had just gained the mastery of Debriseau, bestriding his body and strangling him, with his fingers so fixed in his throat that they seemed deeply to have entered into the flesh. The Guernsey man was black in the face, and his eyes starting from their sockets: in a few minutes he would have been no more, when the mast in the hands of the boatswain descended upon the Irishman's head, and dashed out his brains. At the same moment, one of the Irishmen darted his knife into the side of Seymour, who fell, streaming with his own blood. The fate of their officer, which excited the attention of the seamen, and the fall of M'Dermot on the opposite side, to whose assistance the Irish immediately hastened, added to the suspension of their powers from want of breath, produced a temporary cessation of hostilities. Dragging away their killed and wounded, the panting antagonists retreated to the distance of a few yards from each other, tired, but not satisfied with their revenge, and fully intending to resume the strife as soon as they had recovered the power.

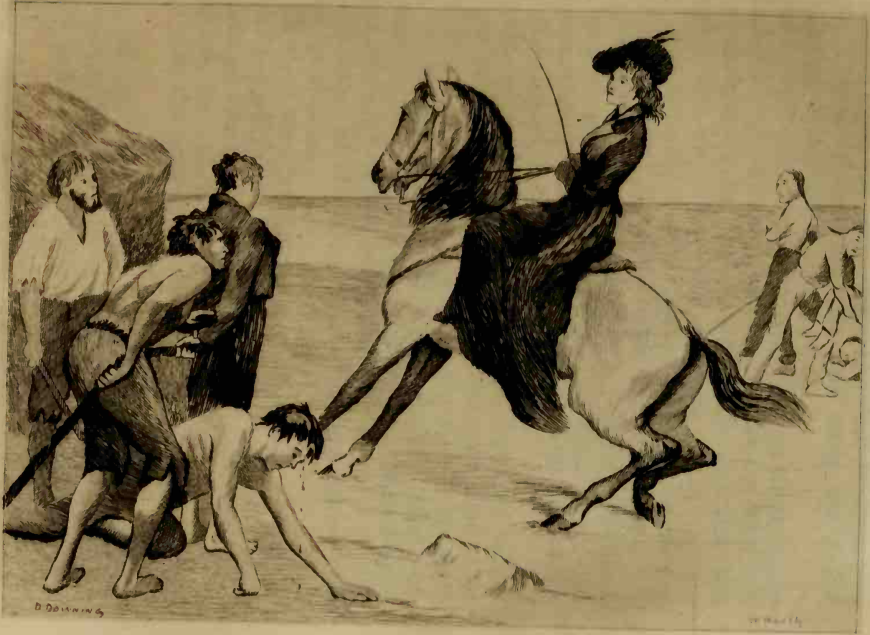
But a very few seconds had elapsed, when they were interrupted by a third party; and the clattering of horses' hoofs was immediately followed by the appearance of a female on horseback, who, galloping past the Irishmen, reined up her steed, throwing him on his haunches, in his full career, in the space between the late contending parties.

"'Tis the daughter of the House!" exclaimed the Irishmen, in consternation.

There wanted no such contrast as the scene described to add lustre to her beauty, or to enhance her charms. Fair as the snow-drift, her cheeks mantling with the roseate blush of exercise and animation—her glossy hair, partly uncurled, and still played with by the amorous breeze, hanging in long ringlets down her neck—her eye, which alternately beamed with pity or flashed with indignation, as it was directed to one side or the other—her symmetry of form, which the close riding dress displayed—her graceful movements, as she occasionally restrained her grey palfrey, who fretted to resume his speed, all combined with her sudden and unexpected appearance to induce the boatswain and his men to consider her as superhuman.

"She's an angel of light!" muttered the boatswain to himself.

She turned to the Irish, and, in an energetic tone,


D DOWNING

addressed them in their own dialect. What she had said was unknown to the English party, but the effect which her language produced was immediate. Their weapons were thrown aside, and they hung down their heads in confusion. They made an attempt to walk away, but a few words from her induced them to remain.

The fair equestrian was now joined by two more, whose pace had not been so rapid; and the boatswain, who had been contemplating her with astonishment, as she was addressing the Irish, now that she was about to turn toward him, recollected that some of his men were not exactly in a costume to meet a lady's eye. He raised his call to his mouth, and, with a sonorous whistle, cried out, "All you without trousers behind shealing, hoy!" an order immediately obeyed by the men who had been deprived of their habiliments.

Conolly, who had understood the conversation which had taken place, called out, in Irish, at the same time as he walked round behind the walls, "I think ye'll be after giving us our duds now, ye dirty spalpeens, so bring 'em wid you quick;" a request which was immediately complied with, the clothes being collected by two of the Irish, and taken to the men who had retired behind the walls of the shealing.

Mr Hardsett was not long in replying to her interrogations, and in giving her an outline of the tragical events which had occurred, while the ladies, trembling with pity and emotion, listened to the painful narrative.

"Are you the only officer then of the frigate that is left?"

"No, madam," replied the boatswain, "the third lieutenant is here, but there he lies, poor fellow, desperately wounded by these men, from whom we expected to have had relief."

"What was the name of your frigate?"

"The *Aspasia*, Captain M——."

"O heaven!" cried the girl, catching at the collar of the boatswain's coat in her trepidation.

" And the wounded officer's name ? "

" Seymour."

A cry of anguish and horror escaped from all the party as the beautiful interrogatress tottered in her seat, and then fell off into the arms of the boatswain.

In a few seconds, recovering herself, she regained her feet. " Quick, quick—lead me to him."

Supported by Hardsett, she tottered to the spot where Seymour lay, with his eyes closed, faint and exhausted with loss of blood, attended by Robinson and Debriseau.

She knelt down by his side, and taking his hand, which she pressed between her own, called him by his name.

Seymour started at the sound of the voice, opened his eyes, and in the beauteous form which was reclining over him, beheld his dear, dear Emily.

Chapter LVII

Ah me! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron!
What plaguy mischiefs and mishaps
Do dog him still with after-claps.
Hudibras.

The melancholy loss of lives which we have detailed, occurred upon a reef of rocks, close to Cape——, on the coast of Galway, and not four miles from the castle and property held by Mr Rainscourt. The intelligence had been communicated to M'Elvina by some of his tenants early in the morning of the day on which the survivors had gained the shore. The western gales, sweeping the Atlantic, and blowing with such fury on the coast, would not permit any vegetation or culture so near the beach; but when once past the range of hills which exposed their rugged sides as barriers to the blast, the land was of good quality, and thickly tenanted. The people were barbarous to an excess, and, as they had stated, claimed a traditionary right to whatever property might be thrown up from the numerous wrecks which took place upon the dangerous and iron-bound coast. This will account for the tragical events of the day.

When M'Elvina was informed of vessels having been stranded, he immediately went up to the castle to procure the means of assistance, which were always held there in readiness, and as many of Rainscourt's people as could be collected. This, however, required some little delay; and Emily, shocked at the imperfect intelligence which had been conveyed to her, determined to ride down immediately, in company with Mrs M'Elvina, and a young friend who was staying with her during her father's absence. On their arrival at the sea-range of hills, the explosion of the shealing, and subsequent conflict between the parties, met their eyes. Emily's fears, and knowledge of the Irish peasantry, immediately suggested the cause, and, aware of her influence with the Rainscourt tenants, she made all the haste that the roads would permit to arrive at the spot, galloping down the hill, in so bold and dexterous a style that her companions neither could nor would have dared to keep pace with her.

How fortunate was her arrival need hardly be observed, as in all probability the English seamen would eventually have been sacrificed to the cupidity and resentment of the natives.

"William, do you know me?" whispered Emily, as the tears rolled down her cheeks, and her countenance betrayed the anguish of her mind.

Seymour pressed the small white hand that trembled in his own, and a faint smile illuminated his features; but the excitement at the appearance of Emily was too great—the blood again gushed from his wound, his eyes closed, and his head fell on his shoulder, as he swooned from the loss of blood.

"Oh, God, preserve him!" cried Emily, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to Heaven, and then sinking down in mental and fervent prayer.

"My dear M'Elvina, I am so glad that you have come at last," said Susan, bursting into tears. "Look at whose side Emily is kneeling,—'tis William Seymour, dying."

"Seymour!" cried M'Elvina, who had but that moment arrived; but aware of the importance of prompt assistance, he called for the basket containing the restoratives, and gently removing Emily, he took her situation by the side of our wounded hero.

To strip off his clothes, examine the wound, bandage it, so as to prevent a further loss of blood, and pour down his throat some diluted wine, was the work of a few minutes. Seymour, who had only fainted, reopened his eyes, and soon showed the good effects of M'Elvina's presence of mind.

"M'Elvina,—is it not?—Did not I see Emily?"

"Yes, you did, my dear fellow; but keep quiet. I do not think your wound is dangerous."

"I am better now, M'Elvina—much better; but I must see Emily."

M'Elvina thought it advisable to accede to his wish, and returned to his wife, who was supporting the fainting girl. A glass of water, the assurance that Seymour would do well, if not too much agitated, and a promise exacted from her to say but little, was followed by an interview which had a reviving effect upon both.

Medical practitioners, who dive into the inmost recesses of the human frame in pursuit of knowledge, and who search through the mineral and vegetable kingdom for relief, when will you produce a balm so healing, a specific so powerful, an elixir so instantaneous or restorative, as—joy?

M'Elvina was in the meantime occupied in preparations for removing the wounded, and portioning out food and necessaries to the rest of the party. When he beheld the sad relics in the shealing, and heard from the boatswain the tragical events of the day, his indignation was beyond bounds. Seven Frenchmen, fifteen Englishmen, and eight Irishmen, had been burnt alive; three Englishmen and five

Irishmen had been killed in the affray; making, independently of many severely wounded, a total of thirty-eight who had perished on this disastrous morning.

The Irish who had attacked them were all tenants of the property belonging either to him or Rainscourt—an immediate notice to quit was given to them on the spot, and the dreadful word, emigration, thundered in their ears. This brought them on their knees, with such crying and beseeching, such uncouth and ridiculous gestures, as almost to create a laugh among the English seamen who were witnesses to the scene.

"Well, if them an't funny beggars, I'll be blowed," cried one of the English seamen.

"Just the way wid 'em," observed Conolly, "all honey or all vinegar—there's never a good turn they won't do ye now. If it had not been for the 'cratur,' there wouldn't have been this blow-up."

But to continue. The bodies of the dead in the shealing were consigned to the earth as they lay, the four walls composing a mausoleum where animosity was buried. The corpses of M'Dermot, and the Irish who had been killed in the conflict, were removed by their friends, that they might be *waked*. By the direction of M'Elvina, the wounded English were carried up by their former antagonists to the small town at the foot of the castle, where surgical assistance was to be obtained. Seymour was placed on a sort of bier that had been constructed for him—Emily and her companions riding by his side; and the cavalcade wound up the hill, the rear brought up by Mr Hardsett and the remainder of the English crew.

In two hours all were at their respective destinations; and Seymour, who had been examined by the surgeon upon his arrival at the castle, and whose wound had been pronounced by no means dangerous, was in bed and fast asleep, Susan and Emily watching by his side.

Debriseau, who had recognised his quondam friend M'Elvina, and perceived by his appearance, and the respect that was shown to him, that he had been more fortunate in his career, since they had parted, than he had himself, from a proud feeling of the moment, did not make himself known. That M'Elvina, who had no idea of meeting him in such a quarter, should not, in the hurry of the scene, distinguish his former associate, covered as he was with dust and blood, and having the appearance more of a New Zealand warrior, than of any other living being, was not surprising—and Debriseau joined the English party in the rear of the cavalcade, and remained with them at the town, while M'Elvina and the rest of the cortége continued their route to the castle, with the wounded Seymour.

As soon as our hero's wound had been dressed, and the favourable opinion of the surgeon had been pronounced, M'Elvina rode down to the town, to make arrangements for the board and lodging of the English seamen. It was then that he was asked by Mr Hardsett, what was to be done with the Frenchman who had been saved.

"Where is he?" demanded M'Elvina.

Debriseau was summoned to the magistrate, and having cleaned himself of the dust and gore, was immediately recognised.

"Debriseau!" exclaimed M'Elvina, with astonishment, and a look of displeasure.

"Even so, Captain M'Elvina," replied Debriseau, haughtily; "you do not seem very well pleased at meeting an old acquaintance."

"Captain Debriseau, will you do me the favour to step on one side with me. I will 'be honest' with you," continued M'Elvina to the Guernseyman, when they were out of hearing of the boatswain and the rest; "and confess that, although I wish you well, I was not pleased at meeting with you here. You addressed me as Captain M'Elvina—that title has long been dropped. I did once confide to you the secret of my former life, and will own, what I little imagined at the time, that I have in consequence put it into your power to do me serious injury

You must now listen to me, while I give you a sketch of my memoirs, from the time that we parted at Cherbourg."

M'Elvina then entered into a short history of what the reader is acquainted with.—"Judge, then, Debriseau," pursued he, "if, after what has passed, I could '*honestly*' say that I was glad to see *you*—who not only, by your presence, reminded me of my former irregularities, but had the means, if you thought proper, of acquainting my friends and acquaintances with what I wish I could forget myself."

"Captain—I beg your pardon—Mr M'Elvina," replied Debriseau with dignity, "I will be as honest as you. I am here without a sous, and without a shirt, and when I leave this, I know not where to lay my hand upon either; but rather than betray a confidence reposed in me, rather than injure one who always was my friend, or, what is still more unworthy, attempt to work upon your fears to my own advantage, I would suffer death, nay, more—*Sacristie* I would sooner turn custom-house officer. No, no, M'Elvina—*Je suis Français, moi*—bah, I mean I am a true Englishman. Never mind what I am—all countries are alike, if a man's heart is in the right place. I sincerely wish you joy of your good fortune, and know nobody that in my opinion deserves it more. I shall go to prison with some resignation, now that I know you have been so fortunate; and do me not the injustice to imagine, that you will ever be troubled by either seeing or hearing from me."

"I waited for this answer, Debriseau: had you made any other, I would have run the risk and defied you; nothing would have induced me to have offered to bribe your silence. But I rejoice in your honest and manly conduct—'Honesty is the best policy,' Debriseau. I can now offer, and you can accept, without blushing on either side, that assistance which I have both the power and will to grant. There is no occasion for your going to prison. I make the returns as magistrate, and, as you are an English subject, will be answerable for the omission.

We are too far from the world here to have any questions asked. And now let me know how I can be of any service to you, for my purse and interest you may command."

"Well, then, to tell you the truth, I am fit for nothing on shore. I must have another vessel, if I can get one."

"Not a smuggling vessel, I hope," replied M'Elvina, gravely.

"I should prefer it, certainly. Why, there's no harm in smuggling, if I recollect your arguments right," replied Debriseau, smiling. "Do you remember the night that you convinced me?"

"I do, very well," said M'Elvina; "but I have reconsidered the subject, and I have one little remark to make, which will upset the whole theory; which is, that other people acting wrong, cannot be urged as an excuse for our own conduct. If it were, the world would soon be left without virtue or honesty. You may think me scrupulous; but I am sincere. Cannot you hit upon something else?"

"Why, I should have no objection to command a fine merchant vessel, if I could obtain such a thing."

"That you shall," replied M'Elvina; "and to make sure of it, and render you more independent, you shall be part-owner. Consider it as *une affaire arrangée*. And now allow me to offer you the means of improving your personal appearance—I presume the leathern bag is empty."

"Bah! a long while ago. After I had lost my vessel, I made up to Mademoiselle Picardon; I thought it would not be a bad speculation—but she never forgave me kicking that dirty puppy downstairs—little beast!"

"Ah! you forget some of my remarks," replied M'Elvina, laughing—"'Love me, love my dog.' Now oblige me by accepting this; and, Debriseau (excuse me), there's a capital barber in this street. *Au revoir*."

Chapter LVIII

Under his lordship's leave, all must be mine.
MIDDLETON.

THE first moments of leisure that M'Elvina could obtain from his duties, were employed in writing to the vicar, informing him of the reappearance of Seymour, under such peculiar circumstances; and requesting his immediate presence, that our hero's claims to the property of Admiral De Courcy might be established. As before observed, Rainscourt was not at the castle, nor was he expected for some days, having accepted an invitation to join a shooting party, collected at the house of an acquaintance, some miles distant. A letter was despatched to him by his daughter, detailing the circumstances of the shipwreck, stating that the wounded officer was in the castle, and that, in consequence, until his return Mrs M'Elvina would remain as her companion.

Although the wound that Seymour had received had been pronounced by the surgeon not to be of a dangerous tendency, still, he did not recover so rapidly as might have been expected from his youth and excellent constitution. The fact was, that all his love for Emily, who was constantly at his side, and could not conceal her regard for him, had returned with tenfold violence. The same honourable principle which had before decided him—that of not taking advantage of her prepossession in his favour, and permitting her to throw away herself and her large fortune upon one of unknown parentage and penniless condition,—militated against his passion, and caused such a tumult of contending feelings, as could not but affect a person in his weak state. A slow fever came on, which retarded the cure, and even threatened more serious consequences.

Madame de Staël has truly observed, that love occupies the whole life of a woman. It is not therefore surprising that women should be more skilful in detecting the symptoms of it in others. Mrs M'Elvina, with the usual penetration of her sex, discovered what was passing in the mind of Seymour, and communicated her suspicions to her husband. As for some days the health of our hero rather declined than improved, M'Elvina determined to entrust him with the secret of his birth, which, by removing all difficulties, he imagined would produce a beneficial effect.

But there was one point which M'Elvina could not conceal from our hero, which was the melancholy fact of his father having, under an assumed name, fallen a sacrifice to the offended laws of his country; and the knowledge of this had so serious an effect upon Seymour, as almost to neutralise the joy arising from the rest of the communication.

The first question which he asked himself was, whether Emily would or ought to marry a man whose father had perished by so ignominious a death; and, now that all other impediments to his making her an offer of his hand were removed, whether that circumstance alone would not be an insuperable bar to their union. Agitated by these conflicting doubts, Seymour passed a sleepless night, and on the ensuing morning his fever had alarmingly increased. This was observed by the surgeon, who stated that he could not account for it, except by supposing that there was something heavy on the mind of his patient, which, unless removed, would retard, if not prevent, recovery.

Susan, who with her husband had imagined that the disclosure which had taken place would have had a beneficial effect, hastened to the sick chamber, and soon persuaded our hero to make her a confidante of his doubts and fears. "There is but one who can satisfy you on that point, my dear William," replied she; "for although I feel convinced that I can answer for her, it is not exactly a case of proxy—M'Elvina will be here directly, and then I will obtain his permission to disclose the whole to Emily, and you will have the answer from her own lips."

In the course of the forenoon, Emily was made acquainted with the eventful history of our hero's birth and parentage—of her no longer being an heiress—of his ardent love for her, and of the fears that he entertained upon the subject.

"I am only sorry for one thing," replied Emily, in her tears, as Susan finished her communication, "that he did not ask me to marry him when I thought that I was an heiress—now, if I accept him, I am afraid it may be thought—Oh, if you knew how I have loved him—how I have thought of him when far away," cried the sobbing girl, "You would not—no one would think me capable of interested motives.—I am so glad the property is his," continued Emily, looking and smiling through her tears.

"Why, my dear Emily, if you begin to make difficulties we shall be worse than ever. There never was a more fortunate occurrence than this attachment between you and Seymour. It reconciles all difficulties, puts an end to all Chancery suits, and will shower general happiness, when some at least must have been made miserable. Come with me—William is very feverish this morning; you only can do him good."

Mrs M'Elvina led the agitated girl into the sick chamber, and whispering to Seymour that Emily knew all, and that all was well, was so very imprudent as to allow her feelings to overcome her sense of chaperonism, and left them together.

I am aware that I now have a fair opportunity of inserting a most interesting conversation, full of *ohs* and *ahs*, *dears* and *sweets*, etc., which could be much relished by all misses of seventeen, or thereabouts; but as I do not write novels for them, and the young couple have no secrets to which the reader is not already a party, I shall leave them to imagine the explanation, with all its concomitant retrospections and anticipations, softened with tears and sweetened with kisses; and, as the plot now thickens, change the scene to the dressing-room of Rainscourt, who returned late last night, and has now just risen, at his usual hour, viz., between two and three in the afternoon. His French valet is in attendance shaving him, and dressing his hair, and communicating what little intelligence, foreign or domestic, he has been enabled to collect for his master's amusement.

"Monsieur has not seen the young officer who was wounded."

"No; I wonder why they brought him up here. What sort of a person is he?"

"*C'est un joli garçon, Monsieur, avec l'air bien distingué.*—I carried in the water this morning when his wound was dressed, for I had the curiosity to see him—*C'est une diable de blessure*—and the young officer has a very singular mark on the right shoulder, like—*comment l'appelez-vous?—pied de corbeau.*"

Rainscourt started under the operation of the razor: he remembered the mark of the grandchild, so minutely described by the vicar.

"*Pardon, Monsieur, ce n'est pas ma faute,*" said the valet, applying a napkin to stanch the blood which flowed from his master's cheek.

"It was not," replied Rainscourt, recovering himself, "I had a slight spasm."

The operation was continued, and fortunately had just been finished when the valet resumed,—"*Et rappelez-vous, Monsieur, le Vicaire de——. Il est arrivé hier au soir,* on a visit to Mr M'Elvina."

"The devil he is?" replied Rainscourt, springing from his chair, at the corroborating incident to his previous ground of alarm.

The astonished countenance of the valet restored the master to his senses. "Bring me my coffee—I am nervous this morning."

But Rainscourt had not long to endure suspense. He had barely finished his toilet, when he was informed that the vicar, M'Elvina, and some other gentlemen, were below, and wished to speak to him.

Rainscourt, anxious to know the worst, descended to the library, where he found the parties before mentioned accompanied by Debriseau and a legal gentleman. We shall not enter into detail. To the dismay of Rainscourt, the identity of our hero was established beyond all doubt, and he felt convinced that eventually he should be forced to surrender up the property. His indignation was chiefly levelled at M'Elvina, whom he considered as the occasion of the whole, not only from having rescued our hero from the wreck, but because it was by his assertions, corroborated by Debriseau, that the chain of evidence was clearly substantiated. M'Elvina, who, from long acquaintance, had a feeling towards Rainscourt which his conduct did not deserve, waited only for his acknowledgment of our hero's claim to communicate the circumstance of the attachment between the young people, which would have barred all further proceedings, and have settled it in an amicable arrangement.

"Well, gentlemen," observed Rainscourt, with pique, "if you can satisfactorily prove in a court of justice all you have now stated, I shall of course bow to its decision; but you must excuse me if, out of regard to my daughter, I resist, until the assertions can be substantiated on oath. You cannot expect otherwise."

"We do not expect otherwise, Mr Rainscourt," replied M'Elvina,—"but we think it will not be necessary that it should go into court."

"Mr M'Elvina," interrupted Rainscourt, angrily,—"I wish no observations from you. After your intimacy with the family, particularly with my daughter, who, by your means, will probably forfeit all her prospects, I consider your conduct base and treacherous. You'll excuse my ringing the bell for the servant to show you the door."

M'Elvina turned pale with rage. "Then, sir, you shall have no suggestions from me. Come, gentlemen, we will retire," continued M'Elvina, now determined that Rainscourt should be left in ignorance for the present; and the parties quitted the room, little contemplating that such direful consequences would ensue from this trifling altercation.

Chapter LIX

> Was there ever seen such villany,
> So neatly plotted, and so well perform'd,
> Both held in hand, and flatly both beguiled?
> *Jew of Malta.*

THE feelings of Rainscourt were worked up to desperation and madness. As soon as the party had quitted the room, he paced up and down, clenching his fists and throwing them in the air, as his blood boiled against M'Elvina, whom he considered as his mortal enemy. To send him a challenge, with the double view of removing him and his testimony, and at the same time of glutting his own revenge, was the idea that floated uppermost in his confused and heated brain. To surrender up the estates—to be liable for the personal property which he had squandered—to sink at once from affluence to absolute pauperism, if not to incarceration,—it was impossible. He continued his rapid movement to and fro, dividing his thoughts between revenge and suicide, when a tap at the door roused him from his gloomy reveries. It was the surgeon who attended Seymour, he came to pay his respects, and make a report of his patient's health to Rainscourt, whom he had not seen since his return to the castle.

"Your most obedient, sir. I am sorry that my patient was not so well when I saw him this morning. I hope to find him better when I go upstairs."

"Oh!" replied Rainscourt, a faint gleam of deliverance from his dilemmas shining upon his dark and troubled mind.

"Yes, indeed," replied the medical gentleman, who, like many others, made the most of his cases, to enhance the value of his services; like Tom Thumb, who "made the giants first, and then killed them"—"a great deal of fever, indeed—I do not like the symptoms. But we must see what we can do."

"Do you think that there is any chance of his *not* recovering?" asked Rainscourt, with emphasis.

"It's hard to say, sir; many much worse have recovered, and many not so ill have been taken off. If the fever abates, all will go well—if it does not, we must hope for the best," replied the surgeon, shrugging up his shoulders.

"Then he might die of the wound, and fever attending it?"

"Most certainly he might. He might be carried off in twenty-four hours."

"Thank you for your visit, Mr B——," replied Rainscourt, who did not wish for his further company. "Good morning."

"Good morning, sir," replied the surgeon, as Rainscourt politely bowed him out of the room.

Rainscourt again paced up and down. "He might die of this fever and wound in twenty-four hours. There could be nothing surprising in it;" and as he cogitated, the demon entered his soul. He sat down and pressed his hands to his burning temples, as he rested his elbows on the table many minutes, perplexed in a chaotic labyrinth of evil thoughts, till the fiend pointed out the path which must be pursued.

He summoned the old nurse. Those who have lived in, or are acquainted with the peculiarities and customs of the sister kingdom, must know that the attachment of the lower Irish to their masters amounts to almost self-devotion. Norah had nursed Rainscourt at her breast, and, remaining in the family, had presided over the cradle of Emily—adhering to Rainscourt in his poverty, and, now, in the winter of her days, basking in the sun of his prosperity.

"The blessings of the day upon the master," said the old woman as she entered.

Rainscourt locked the door. "Norah," said he, "I have bad news to tell you. Are you aware that the castle is no longer mine ?"

"The castle no longer yours! Och hone," replied the old woman, opening her eyes wide with astonishment.

"That I am a beggar, and shall be sent to prison ?"

"The master to prison.—Och hone!"

"That my daughter is no longer an heiress, but without a shilling ?"

"The beautiful child without a shilling—Och hone!"

"That you will have to leave—be turned out of the castle ?"

"Me turned out of the castle—Och hone!"

"Yes, Norah, all this will take place in a few days."

"And who will do it ?"

"Why, the young man upstairs, whose life we are saving. So much for gratitude."

"Gratitude! Och hone—and so young—and so beautiful, too, as he is."

"But he may die, Norah."

"Sure enough he may die," replied the old woman brightening up at the idea. "It's a bad fever that's on him."

"And he may recover, Norah."

"Sure enough he may recover," replied she mournfully, "he's but young blood."

"Now, Norah, do you love your master—do you love your young mistress ?"

"Do I love the master and the mistress ?" replied the old woman indignantly; "and it's you that's after asking me such a question!"

"Can you bear to see us turned out of house and home—to be cast on the wide world with poverty and rags ? Will you permit it, when, by assisting me, you can prevent it ?"

"Can I bear it ?—will I assist ?—tell me the thing that you'd have me do, that's all."

"I said that the wounded person might die—Norah, he *must* die."

The old woman looked up earnestly at Rainscourt's face, as if to understand him. "I see!"—then remaining with her head down for some time, as if in cogitation, she again looked up. "Will Father O'Sullivan give me absolution for that?"

"He will—he shall—I will pay for ten thousand masses for your soul over and above."

"But what would you have me do—so young and so beautiful, too! I'll think over it to-night. I never sleep much now, the rats are so troublesome."

"Rats!" cried Rainscourt; "why not get some arsenic?"

"Arsenic!" echoed the old woman; "is it arsenic for the rats you mean?"

"Yes," replied Rainscourt, significantly; "for all sorts of rats—those who would undermine the foundation of an ancient house."

"Sure it's an old house, that of the Rainscourts," replied the nurse: "but I'm giddy a little—I'll think a bit."

In a second or two, her face brightened up a little.

"Why don't you marry the two together? Such a handsome couple as they'd be!"

"Marry, you old fool! Do you think, now that he is aware that all the property is his, that he would marry Emily, without a sixpence? No—no."

"True—and it's the arsenic you want, then?—and you're sure that the priest will give absolution?"

"Sure," replied Rainscourt, out of patience; "come to me at daylight to-morrow morning."

"Well, I'll think about it to-night when I'm asleep.—And so young, and so beautiful, too. Och hone!" murmured the old woman, as she unlocked the door, and with tremulous gait quitted the room.

Rainscourt, left to himself, again became the prey to conflicting passions. Although his conscience had long been proof against any remorse at the commission of the every-day crimes which stained the earth, yet it recoiled at meditated murder. More than once he determined to leave it all to chance, and if Seymour did recover, to fly the country with all the money he could raise; but the devil had possession and was not to be cast out.

The door was again opened, and Emily, radiant with happiness after the interview with Seymour, in which she had plighted and received the troth of her beloved, entered the room.

"My dear father, Mr Seymour is so much better this evening."

"Would he were in his grave!" replied Rainscourt, bitterly.

Emily had come in, at the request of Seymour, to state to her father what had taken place, but this violent exclamation deterred her. She thought that it was not a favourable moment, and she retired, wishing him good-night, with no small degree of indignation expressed in her countenance at his iniquitous wish. She retired to her chamber—her anger was soon chased away by the idea that it was for her sake that her father was so irritated, and that to-morrow all would be well. Bending to her Creator in gratitude and love, and not forgetting Seymour in her visions, she laid her head upon her pillow, and visions of future happiness filled her dreams in uninterrupted succession.

Enjoy them, beautiful and innocent one! Revel in them, if it were possible, to satiety—for they are thy last enjoyment. How much would the misery of this world be increased, if we were permitted to dive into futurity. How few of us would think it worth our while to continue the journey! The life of a man is a pilgrimage in error and in darkness. The ignis fatuus that he always pursues, always deceives him, yet he is warned in vain—at the moment of disappointment, he resolves—sees another, and pursues again. The fruit is turned to ashes in his mouth at the fancied moment of enjoyment—warning succeeds warning—disappointment is followed up by disappointment—every grey hair in his head may be considered as a sad memento of dear bought, yet useless experience—still he continues, spurred on by Hope, anticipating everything, in pursuit of nothing, until he stumbles into his grave, and all is over.

Little did M'Elvina and the vicar think what the consequences would be of their leaving Rainscourt in his wrath. Little did Rainscourt and the nurse imagine how dreadful and how futile would be the results of their wicked intentions. Little did the enamoured and guileless pair, who now slumbered in anticipated bliss, contemplate what, in the never-ceasing parturition of time, the morrow would bring forth.

Early in the morning, Rainscourt, who was awake, and who had not taken off his clothes, was startled by a low tapping at his door. It was the nurse.

"Well," said Rainscourt, hastily, "have you procured what we were talking of?"

"I have indeed; but——"

"No buts, Norah, or we part forever. Where is it? Who is with him?"

"One of the women. I tould her I would nurse him after daylight."

"When does he take his fever draughts?"

"Every two hours — Och hone, he'll take but one more.—So young, and so beautiful, too."

"Silence, fool; go and send the other woman to bed, and then bring in one of the draughts."

The old nurse turned back as she was hobbling away,—"And the absolution?"

"Away, and do as I order you," cried Rainscourt, with violence.

"Blessed Jesus, don't talk so loud! It's the whole house will hear you," said the hag, beseechingly, as she left the room.

She returned with the draught. Rainscourt poured in the powder, and shook it with desperation. "Now this is the first draught he must take; give it him directly."

"Och hone!" cried the old woman, as she received the vial in her trembling hands.

"Go; and come back and tell me when he has taken it."

Norah left the room. Rainscourt waited her return in a state of mind so horribly painful that large drops of perspiration poured from his forehead. At one moment, he would have recalled her—the next, beggary stared him in the face, and his diabolical resolution was confirmed. His agony of suspense became so intense that he could wait no longer. He went to the door of the sick chamber, and opening it gently, looked in.

The old woman was sitting down on the floor, crouched, with her elbows on her knees, and her face and head covered over with her cloak. The noise of the hinges startled her, she uncovered her head and looked up. Rainscourt made signs to her, inquiring whether he had taken the draught. She shook her head. He pointed his finger angrily, desiring her to give it. The old woman sunk on her knees, and held up her hands in supplication. Rainscourt beckoned her out—she followed him to his own room.

"Do you see these pistols?" said Rainscourt—"they are loaded. Immediately obey my orders—promise me on your soul, that you will, or you shall be the occasion of your master's death. Swear!" continued he, putting one of the pistols to his ear, and his finger to the trigger.

"I will do it—on my soul I will, master dear," cried Norah. "Only put away the pistols, and if he were thousands more beautiful, and if my soul is to be burnt forever, I'll do it."

Again she returned to the chamber of the victim, followed by Rainscourt, who stood at the door to fortify her resolution.

Seymour was awoke by the old beldam—from a dream in which the form of Emily blessed his fancy—to take the fatal draught now poured out and presented to him. Accustomed to the febrifuge at certain hours, he drank it off in haste, that he might renew his dreaming happiness. "What is it? It burns my throat!" cried Seymour.

"It's not the like of what you have taken before," said the old woman, shuddering, as she offered him some water to take the taste away.

"Thank you, nurse," said Seymour, as he again sank on his pillow.

Chapter LX

> *Hor.* You see he is departing.
>
> *Corn.* Let me come to him; give me him as he is. If he be turned to earth, let me but give him one hearty kiss, and you shall put us both into one coffin.
>
> WEBSTER.

IT was but a few minutes after the scene described in the last chapter, that Emily awoke from her slumbers, and chid the sun for rising before her. As soon as she was dressed, she descended to inquire after the health of him, whose fate was now entwined with her own. She gently opened the door of the room. The shutters were yet closed, but the sun poured his rays through the chinks, darting, in spite of the obstruction, a light which rendered the night lamp useless. The curtains of the bed were closed, and all was quiet. Norah sat upon the floor, her eyes fixed upon the ceiling with wild and haggard look, and as she passed the beads which she was telling from one finger to the other (her lips in rapid and convulsive motion, but uttering no sound), it appeared as if she thought the remnant of her life too short for the prayers, which she had to offer to the throne above.

Emily having in vain attempted to catch her eye, and fearful of waking Seymour, tripped gently across, and pushed the nurse by the shoulder, beckoning her out of the chamber. Norah followed her mistress into an opposite room, when Emily, who had been alarmed by the behaviour of the old woman, spoke in a low and hurried tone. "Good heavens, what is the matter, Norah? You look so dreadful. Is he worse?"

"Och hone!" said the nurse, her thoughts evidently wandering.

"Tell me, nurse, answer me, is he worse?"

"I don't know," replied Norah; "the doctor will tell."

"Oh God! he's worse—I'm sure he is," cried Emily, bursting into tears. "What will become of me, if my dear, dear Seymour——"

"*Your* dear Seymour?" cried the startled Norah.

"Yes, my dear Seymour. I did not tell you—I love him, nurse—he loves me—we have plighted our troth; and if he dies, what will become of me?" continued the sobbing girl.

"Och hone! and is it the truth, and the real truth, that you're telling me, and *was* he to be your husband?"

"*Was* he!—he *is*, Norah. What did you mean by *was* he?" cried Emily, in hurried accents, seizing the old woman by the wrist, with a look of fearful anxiety.

"Did I say, was he? I did, sure enough, and it's true too. I thought to do my darling a service, and I cared little for my own soul. So young! and so beautiful too. And it's a nice pair ye would have made. And it's I that have kilt him!! Och hone!" cried Norah, wringing her withered hands.

"Killed him, Norah! What have you done?—tell me directly," screamed Emily, shaking the old hag with all her force—"Quick!"

The old nurse seemed to have all the violence of her mistress's feelings communicated to her as she cried out, with a face of horror, "It was all for ye that I did it. It's the master that made me do it. He said my darling would be a beggar. It's the poison for the rats he's taken. Och, och, hone!" and the old woman sunk on the floor, covering up her head, while Emily flew shrieking out of the room.

When M'Elvina and his party quitted the castle, they returned to M'Elvina's house. "I cannot but pity Mr

Rainscourt," observed the vicar; "indeed I wish that, notwithstanding his violence, we had not quitted him without making the communication."

"So do I," replied M'Elvina; "but the injustice of his accusation prevented me; and I must confess that I have some pleasure in allowing him to remain twenty-four hours in suspense—longer than that, not even my revenge has stomach for."

"I am afraid," observed Debriseau, "that we have done unwisely. The violence and selfishness of the man's character are but too well known, and Seymour is in his power."

"Do not be so uncharitable, sir," replied the vicar, gravely. "Mr Rainscourt, with all his faults, is incapable of anything so base as what you have hinted at."

"I trust I have done him injustice," replied Debriseau; "but I saw that in his eye, during the interview, which chilled my blood when I thought of your young friend."

"At all events, when I go up to-morrow morning to see how Seymour is, I think it will be right to inform Mr Rainscourt of the facts. I shall be there by daylight. Will you accompany me, sir?" said M'Elvina to the vicar.

"With pleasure," replied the other; and from this arrangement the vicar and M'Elvina were at the castle, and had sent their cards in to Mr Rainscourt, at the very time that Emily had beckoned the old nurse out of the chamber.

As long as the deed still remained to be done, the conflict between the conscience and the evil intentions of Rainscourt had been dreadful; but now that it was done, now that the Rubicon had been passed, to listen to the dictates of conscience was useless; and, worn out as it had been in the struggle, and further soothed by the anticipation of continued prosperity, it no longer had the power to goad him. In short, conscience for the time had been overcome, and Rainscourt enjoyed, after the tempest, a hollow and deceitful calm, which he vainly hoped would be continued.

When M'Elvina and the vicar were announced, he thought it prudent to receive them. The bottle of brandy, to which he had made frequent applications during the morning, was removed; and having paid some slight attention to his person, he requested that they would walk up into his dressing-room. When they entered, the violence of the preceding day was no longer to be perceived in his countenance, which wore the appearance of mental suffering. The consciousness of guilt was mistaken for humility, and the feelings of both M'Elvina and the vicar were kindly influenced towards Rainscourt.

"Mr Rainscourt," said the former, "we pay you this early visit that we may have the pleasure of relieving your mind from a weight which it is but too evident presses heavily upon it. We think, when you hear what we have to impart, you will agree with us, that there will be no occasion for litigation or ill-will. Mr Seymour and your daughter have repeatedly met before this, and have long been attached to each other; and although Mr Seymour was too honourable to make your daughter an offer at the time that he was friendless and unknown, yet the very first moment after he became acquainted with the change in his circumstances, he made a proposal, and was accepted. I presume there can be no objections to the match; and allow us, therefore, to congratulate you upon so fortunate a termination of a very unpleasant business."

Rainscourt heard it all—it rang in his ears—it was torture, horrible torture. When they thought that his eye would beam with delight, it turned glassy and fixed—when they thought that his features would be illumined with smiles, they were distorted with agony—when they thought that his hands would be extended to seize theirs, offered in congratulation, they were clenched with the rigidity of muscle of the drowning man.

The vicar and M'Elvina looked at him and each other in dismay; but their astonishment was not to last. The door burst open, and the frantic and shrieking Emily flew into the room, exclaiming, "They have murdered him!—Oh, God!

they have poisoned him. My father—my father—how could you do it ?" continued the girl, as she sank, without animation, on the floor.

The vicar, whose brain reeled at the dreadful intelligence, had scarcely power to move to the assistance of Emily, while M'Elvina, whose feelings of horror were mingled with indignation, roughly seized Rainscourt by the collar, and detained him his prisoner.

"I am so," calmly replied Rainscourt, who, stunned by the condition of his daughter, the futility and blindness of his measures, and the unexpected promulgation of his guilt, offered no resistance. "Had you made your communication yesterday, sir, this would not have happened. I surrender myself up to justice. You have no objection to my retiring a few minutes to my bedroom, till the officers come—I have papers to arrange ?"

M'Elvina acceded; and Rainscourt, bowing low for the attention, went into the adjoining room, and closed the door. A few seconds had but elapsed, when the report of a pistol was heard. M'Elvina rushed in, and found Rainscourt dead upon the floor, the gorgeous tapestry besprinkled with the blood and brains of the murderer and the suicide.

One more scene, and all is over. Draw up the curtain, and behold the chamber in which, but the evening before, two souls, as pure as ever spurned the earth and flew to heaven,—two forms, perfect as ever nature moulded in her happiest mood,—two hearts, that beat responsive without one stain of self,—two hands, that plighted troth, and vowed and meant to love and cherish, with all that this world could offer in possession—health, wealth, power of intellect and cultivated minds—Joy and Love hand in hand smiling on the present—Hope, with her gilded wand, pointing to futurity,—all vanished! And, in their place, standing like funeral mourners, at each corner of the bed, Misery,—Despair,—Agony,—and Death!—Woe, woe, too great for utterance—all is as silent, as horribly silent, as the grave, yawning for its victim.

M'Elvina and Susan are supporting the sufferer in his last agonies; and as he writhes, and his beseeching eyes are turned towards them, supply the water, which but for a moment damps the raging fire within.

The surgeon has retired from his useless and painful task—habituated to death, but not to such a scene as this.

The vicar, anxious to administer religious balm, knows that in excruciating torture his endeavours would be vain, and the tears roll down his cheeks as he turns away from a sight which his kind heart will not allow him to behold.

Emily is on her knees, holding Seymour's hand, which, even in his agony, he attempts not to remove. Her face is lying down upon it, that she may not behold his sufferings. She speaks not—moves not—weeps not—all is calm—deceitful calm—her heart is broken!

And there he lies—"the young, the beautiful, the brave"—in one short hour to be

"A thing
O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing."

THE END.

The Pirate

Chapter I

THE BAY OF BISCAY

It was in the latter part of the month of June, of the year 179-, that the angry waves of the Bay of Biscay were gradually subsiding, after a gale of wind as violent as it was unusual during that period of the year. Still they rolled heavily; and, at times, the wind blew up in fitful, angry gusts, as if it would fain renew the elemental combat; but each effort was more feeble, and the dark clouds which had been summoned to the storm now fled in every quarter before the powerful rays of the sun, who burst their masses asunder with a glorious flood of light and heat; and, as he poured down his resplendent beams, piercing deep into the waters of that portion of the Atlantic to which we now refer, with the exception of one object, hardly visible, as at creation, there was a vast circumference of water, bounded by the fancied canopy of heaven. We have said, with the exception of one object; for in the centre of this picture, so simple, yet so sublime, composed of the three great elements, there was a remnant of the fourth. We say a remnant, for it was but the hull of a vessel, dismasted, water-logged, its upper works only floating occasionally above the waves, when a transient repose from their still violent undulation permitted it to reassume its buoyancy. But this was seldom; one moment it was deluged by the seas, which broke as they poured over its gunwale; and the next, it rose from its submersion as the water escaped from the port-holes at its sides.

How many thousands of vessels—how many millions of property—have been abandoned, and eventually consigned to the all-receiving depths of the ocean, through ignorance or through fear! What a mine of wealth must lie buried in its sands, what riches lie entangled among its rocks, or remain suspended in its unfathomable gulf, where the compressed fluid is equal in gravity to that which it encircles, there to remain secured in its embedment from corruption and decay, until the destruction of the universe, and the return of chaos. Yet, immense as the accumulated loss must be, the major part of it has been occasioned from an ignorance of one of the first laws of nature, that of specific gravity. The vessel to which we have referred was, to all appearance, in a situation of as extreme hazard as that of a drowning man clinging to a single rope-yarn; yet, in reality, she was more secure from descending to the abyss below than many gallantly careering on the waters, their occupants dismissing all fear, and only calculating upon a quick arrival into port.

The *Circassian* had sailed from New Orleans, a gallant and well-appointed ship, with a cargo, the major part of which consisted of cotton. The captain was, in the usual acceptation of the term, a good sailor; the crew were hardy and able seamen. As they crossed the Atlantic, they had encountered the gale to which we have referred, were driven down into the Bay of Biscay, where, as we shall hereafter explain, the vessel was dismasted, and sprang a leak, which baffled all their exertions to keep under. It was now five days since the frightened crew had quitted the vessel in two of her boats, one of which had swamped, and every soul that occupied it had perished; the fate of the other was uncertain.

We said that the crew had deserted the vessel, but we did not assert that every existing being had been removed out of her. Had such been the case, we should not have taken up the reader's time in describing inanimate matter.

It is life that we portray, and life there still was, in the shattered hull thus abandoned to the mockery of the ocean. In the *caboose* of the *Circassian*, that is, in the cooking-house, secured on deck, and which fortunately had been so well fixed as to resist the force of the breaking waves, remained three beings—a man, a woman, and a child. The two first mentioned were of that inferior race which have, for so long a period, been procured from the sultry Afric coast, to toil, but reap not for themselves; the child which lay at the breast of the female was of European blood, now, indeed, deadly pale, as it attempted in vain to draw sustenance from its exhausted nurse, down whose sable cheeks the tears coursed, as she occasionally pressed the infant to her breast, or turned it round to leeward to screen it from the spray, which dashed over them at each returning swell. Indifferent to all else, save her little charge, she spoke not, although she shuddered with the cold, as the water washed her knees each time that the hull was careened into the wave. Cold and terror had produced a change in her complexion, which now wore a yellow or sort of copper hue.

The male, who was her companion, sat opposite to her upon the iron range, which once had been the receptacle of light and heat, but was now but a weary seat to a drenched and worn-out wretch. He, too, had not spoken for many hours; with the muscles of his face relaxed, his thick lips pouting far in advance of his collapsed cheeks, his high cheek-bones, prominent as budding horns, his eyes displaying little but their whites, he appeared to be an object of greater misery than the female, whose thoughts were directed to the infant, and not unto herself. Yet his feelings were still acute, although his faculties appeared to be deadened by excess of suffering.

"Eh, me!" cried the negro woman faintly, after a long silence, her head falling back with extreme exhaustion. Her companion made no reply, but, roused at the sound of her voice, bent forward, slided open the door a little, and looked out to windward. The heavy spray dashed into his glassy eyes, and obscured his vision ; he groaned, and fell back into his former position. "What you tink, Coco?" inquired the negress, covering up more carefully the child, as she bent her head down upon it. A look of despair, and a shudder from cold and hunger, were the only reply.

It was then about eight o'clock in the morning, and the swell of the ocean was fast subsiding. At noon the warmth of the sun was communicated to them through the planks of the *caboose*, while its rays poured a small stream of vivid light through the chinks of the closed panels. The negro appeared gradually to revive : at last he rose, and with some difficulty contrived again to slide open the door. The sea had gradually decreased its violence, and but occasionally broke over the vessel ; carefully holding on by the door-jambs, Coco gained the outside, that he might survey the horizon.

"What you see, Coco?" said the female, observing from the *caboose* that his eyes were fixed upon a certain quarter.

"So help me God, me tink me see something ; but ab so much salt water in um eye, me no see clear," replied Coco, rubbing away the salt, which had crystallised on his face during the morning.

"What you tink um like, Coco ?"

"Only one bit cloud," replied he, entering the *caboose*, and resuming his seat upon the grate with a heavy sigh.

"Eh me!" cried the negress, who had uncovered the child to look at it, and whose powers were sinking fast. "Poor lilly Massa Eddard, him look very bad indeed—him die very soon, me fear. Look, Coco, no ab breath."

The child's head fell back from the breast of its nurse, and life appeared to be extinct.

"Judy, you no ab milk for piccaninny ; suppose um no ab milk, how can live ? Eh ! stop, Judy, me put lilly finger in um mouth ; suppose Massa Eddard no dead, im pull."

Coco inserted his finger into the child's mouth, and felt a slight drawing pressure. "Judy," cried Coco, "Massa

Eddard no dead yet. Try now, suppose you ab lilly drop oder side."

Poor Judy shook her head mournfully, and a tear rolled down her cheek; she was aware that nature was exhausted. "Coco," said she, wiping her cheek with the back of her hand, "me give me heart blood for Massa Eddard; but no ab milk—all gone."

This forcible expression of love for the child, which was used by Judy, gave an idea to Coco. He drew his knife out of his pocket, and very coolly sawed to the bone of his fore-finger. The blood flowed and trickled down to the extremity, which he applied to the mouth of the infant.

"See, Judy, Massa Eddard suck—him not dead," cried Coco, chuckling at the fortunate result of the experiment, and forgetting, at the moment, their almost hopeless situation.

The child, revived by the strange sustenance, gradually recovered its powers, and in a few minutes it pulled at the finger with a certain degree of vigour.

"Look, Judy, how Massa Eddard take it," continued Coco. "Pull away, Massa Eddard, pull away. Coco ab ten finger, and take long while suck 'em all dry." But the child was soon satisfied, and fell asleep in the arms of Judy.

"Coco, suppose you go see again," observed Judy. The negro again crawled out, and again he scanned the horizon.

"So help me God, this time me tink, Judy—yes, so help me God, me see a ship!" cried Coco joyfully.

"Eh!" screamed Judy, faintly, with delight; "den Massa Eddard no die."

"Yes, so help me God—he come dis way!" and Coco, who appeared to have recovered a portion of his former strength and activity, clambered on the top of the *caboose*, where he sat, crossed-legged, waving his yellow handkerchief, with the hope of attracting the attention of those on board; for he knew that it was very possible that an object floating little more than level with the water's surface might escape notice.

As it fortunately happened, the frigate, for such she was, continued her course precisely for the wreck, although it had not been perceived by the look-out men at the mast-heads, whose eyes had been directed to the line of the horizon. In less than an hour, our little party were threatened with a new danger, that of being run over by the frigate, which was now within a cable's length of them, driving the seas before her in one widely-extended foam, as she pursued her rapid and impetuous course. Coco shouted to his utmost, and fortunately attracted the notice of the men who were on the bowsprit, stowing away the foretopmast-staysail, which had been hoisted up to dry after the gale.

"Starboard, hard!" was roared out.

"Starboard it is," was the reply from the quarter-deck, and the helm was shifted without inquiry, as it always is on board of a man-of-war, although, at the same time, it behoves people to be rather careful how they pass such an order, without being prepared with a subsequent and most satisfactory explanation.

The topmast studding-sail flapped and fluttered, the foresail shivered, and the jib filled as the frigate rounded to, narrowly missing the wreck, which was now under the bows, rocking so violently in the white foam of the agitated waters, that it was with difficulty that Coco could, by clinging to the stump of the mainmast, retain his elevated position. The frigate shortened sail, hove-to, and lowered down a quarter-boat, and, in less than five minutes, Coco, Judy, and the infant, were rescued from their awful situation. Poor Judy, who had borne up against all for the sake of the child, placed it in the arms of the officer who relieved them, and then fell back in a state of insensibility, in which condition she was carried on board. Coco, as he took his place in the stern-sheets of the boat, gazed wildly round him, and then broke out into peals of extravagant laughter, which continued without intermission, and were the only replies which he could give to the interrogatories of the quarter-deck, until he fell down in a swoon, and was entrusted to the care of the surgeon.

Chapter II

THE BACHELOR

On the evening of the same day on which the child and the two negroes had been saved from the wreck by the fortunate appearance of the frigate, Mr Witherington, of Finsbury Square, was sitting alone in his dining-room, wondering what could have become of the *Circassian*, and why he had not received intelligence of her arrival. Mr Witherington, as we said before, was alone; he had his port and his sherry before him; and, although the weather was rather warm, there was a small fire in the grate, because, as Mr Witherington asserted, it looked comfortable. Mr Witherington having watched the ceiling of the room for some time, although there was certainly nothing new to be discovered, filled another glass of wine, and then proceeded to make himself more comfortable by unbuttoning three more buttons of his waistcoat, pushing his wig farther back off his head, and casting loose all the buttons at the knees of his breeches; he completed his arrangements by dragging towards him two chairs within his reach, putting his legs upon one while he rested his arm upon the other: and why was not Mr Witherington to make himself comfortable? He had good health, a good conscience, and eight thousand a-year.

Satisfied with all his little arrangements, Mr Witherington sipped his port wine, and, putting down his glass again, fell back in his chair, placed his hands on his breast, interwove his fingers; and in this most comfortable position recommenced his speculations as to the non-arrival of the *Circassian*.

We will leave him to his cogitations while we introduce him more particularly to our readers.

The father of Mr Witherington was a younger son of one of the oldest and proudest families in the West Riding of Yorkshire: he had his choice of the four professions allotted to younger sons whose veins are filled with patrician blood—the army, the navy, the law, and the church. The army did not suit him, he said, as marching and counter-marching were not comfortable; the navy did not suit him, as there was little comfort in gales of wind and mouldy biscuit: the law did not suit him, as he was not sure that he would be at ease with his conscience, which would not be comfortable; the church was also rejected, as it was, with him, connected with the idea of a small stipend, hard duty, a wife and eleven children, which were anything but comfortable. Much to the horror of his family, he eschewed all the liberal professions, and embraced the offer of an old backslider of an uncle, who proposed to him a situation in his banking-house, and a partnership as soon as he deserved it: the consequence was, that his relations bade him an indignant farewell, and then made no further inquiries about him; he was as decidedly cut as one of the female branches of the family would have been had she committed a *faux pas*.

Nevertheless, Mr Witherington senior stuck diligently to his business, in a few years was a partner, and, at the death of the old gentleman, his uncle, found himself in possession of a good property, and every year coining money at his bank.

Mr Witherington senior then purchased a house in Finsbury Square, and thought it advisable to look out for a wife.

Having still much of the family pride in his composition, he resolved not to muddle the blood of the Witheringtons by any cross from Cateaton Street or Mincing Lane; and, after a proper degree of research, he selected the daughter of a Scotch earl, who went to London with a bevy of nine in a Leith smack to barter blood for wealth. Mr Witherington, being so fortunate as to be the first comer, had the pick of the nine ladies by courtesy; his choice was light haired, blue-eyed, a little freckled, and very tall, by no means bad-looking, and standing on the list in the family Bible No. IV. From this union Mr Witherington had issue; first, a daughter, christened Moggy, whom we shall soon have to introduce to our reader as a spinster of forty-seven; and second, Antony Alexander Witherington, Esquire, whom we just now have left in a very comfortable position, and in a very brown study.

Mr Witherington senior persuaded his son to enter the banking-house; and, as a dutiful son, he entered it every day, but he did nothing more, having made the fortunate discovery that "his father was born before him;" or, in other words, that his father had plenty of money, and would be necessitated to leave it behind him.

As Mr Witherington senior had always studied comfort, his son had early imbibed the same idea, and carried his feelings, in that respect, to a much greater excess: he divided things into comfortable and uncomfortable. One fine day, Lady Mary Witherington, after paying all the household bills, paid the debt of Nature; that is, she died: her husband paid the undertaker's bill, so it is to be presumed that she was buried.

Mr Witherington senior shortly afterwards had a stroke of apoplexy, which knocked him down. Death, who has no feelings of honour, struck him when down. And Mr Witherington, after having laid a few days in bed, was by a second stroke laid in the same vault as Lady Mary Witherington: and Mr Witherington junior (our Mr Witherington), after deducting £40,000 for his sister's fortune, found himself in possession of a clear £8000 per annum, and an excellent house in Finsbury Square. Mr Witherington considered this a comfortable income, and he therefore retired altogether from business.

During the lifetime of his parents, he had been witness to one or two matrimonial scenes, which had induced him to put down matrimony as one of the things not comfortable; therefore he remained a bachelor.

His sister Moggy also remained unmarried; but whether it were from a very unprepossessing squint which deterred suitors, or from the same dislike to matrimony as her brother had inbibed, it is not in our power to say. Mr Witherington was three years younger than his sister; and, although he had for some time worn a wig, it was only because he considered it more comfortable. Mr Witherington's whole character might be summed up in two words—eccentricity and benevolence: eccentric he certainly was, as most bachelors usually are. Man is but a rough pebble without the attrition received from contact with the gentler sex: it is wonderful how the ladies pumice a man down into a smoothness which occasions him to roll over and over with the rest of his species, jostling but not wounding his neighbours, as the waves of circumstance bring him into collision with them.

Mr Witherington roused himself from his deep reverie, and felt for the string connected with the bell-pull, which it was the butler's duty invariably to attach to the arm of his master's chair previous to his last exit from the dining-room; for, as Mr Witherington very truly observed, it was very uncomfortable to be obliged to get up and ring the bell; indeed, more than once Mr Witherington had calculated the advantages and disadvantages of having a daughter about eight years old who could ring the bell, air the newspapers, and cut the leaves of a new novel.

When, however, he called to mind that she could not always remain at that precise age, he decided that the balance of comfort was against it.

Mr Witherington, having pulled the bell again, fell into a brown study.

Mr Jonathan, the butler, made his appearance; but, observing that his master was occupied, he immediately stopped at the door, erect, motionless, and with a face as melancholy as if he was performing mute at the porch of some departed peer of the realm; for it is an understood thing that the greater the rank of the defunct, the longer must be the face, and, of course, the better must be the pay.

Now, as Mr Witherington is still in profound thought, and Mr Jonathan will stand as long as a hackney-coach horse, we will just leave them as they are, while we introduce the brief history of the latter to our readers. Jonathan Trapp had served as foot*boy*, which term, we believe, is derived from those who are in that humble capacity receiving a *quantum suff.* of the application of the feet of those above them to increase the energy of their service; then as foot*man*, which implies that they have been promoted to the more agreeable right of administering instead of receiving the above dishonourable applications; and lastly, for promotion could go no higher in the family, he had been raised to the dignity of butler in the service of Mr Witherington senior. Jonathan then fell in love, for butlers are guilty of indiscretions as well as their masters: neither he nor his fair flame, who was a lady's maid in another family, notwithstanding that they had witnessed the consequences of this error in others, would take warning: they gave warning, and they married.

Like most butlers and ladies' maids who pair off, they set up a public-house, and it is but justice to the lady's maid to say, that she would have preferred an eating-house, but was overruled by Jonathan, who argued, that although people would drink when they were not dry, they never would eat unless they were hungry.

Now, although there was truth in the observation, this is certain, that business did not prosper; it has been surmised that Jonathan's tall, lank, lean figure, injured his custom, as people are but too much inclined to judge of the goodness of the ale by the rubicund face and rotundity of the landlord; and therefore inferred that there could be no good beer where mine host was the picture of famine. There certainly is much in appearances in this world; and it appears, that in consequence of Jonathan's cadaverous appearance, he very soon appeared in the gazette: but what ruined Jonathan in one profession procured him immediate employment in another. An appraiser, upholsterer, and undertaker, who was called in to value the fixtures, fixed his eye upon Jonathan, and knowing the value of his peculiarly lugubrious appearance, and having a half-brother of equal height, offered him immediate employment as a mute. Jonathan soon forgot to mourn his own loss of a few hundreds in his new occupation of mourning the loss of thousands; and his erect, still, statue-like carriage, and long melancholy face, as he stood at the portals of those who had entered the portals of the next world, were but too often a sarcasm upon the grief of the inheritors. Even grief is worth nothing in this trafficking world unless it is paid for. Jonathan buried many, and at last buried his wife. So far all was well; but at last he buried his master, the undertaker, which was not quite so desirable. Although Jonathan wept not, yet did he express mute sorrow as he marshalled him to his long home, and drank to his memory in a pot of porter as he returned from the funeral, perched, with many others, like carrion crows on the top of the hearse.

And now Jonathan was thrown out of employment from a reason which most people would have thought the highest recommendation. Every undertaker refused to take him, because they could not *match* him. In this unfortunate dilemma, Jonathan thought of Mr Witherington junior; he had served and he had buried Mr Witherington his father, and Lady Mary his mother; he felt that he had strong claims for such variety of services, and he applied to the bachelor. Fortunately for Jonathan, Mr Witherington's butler incumbent was just about to commit the same folly as Jonathan had done before, and Jonathan was again installed, resolving in his own mind to lead his former life, and have nothing more to do with ladies' maids. But from habit Jonathan still carried himself as a mute on all ordinary occasions—never indulging in an approximation to mirth, except when he perceived that his master was in high spirits, and then rather from a sense of duty than from any real hilarity of heart.

Jonathan was no mean scholar for his station in life, and, during his service with the undertaker, he had acquired the English of all the Latin mottos which are placed upon the hatchments; and these mottos, when he considered them as apt, he was very apt to quote. We left Jonathan standing at the door; he had closed it, and the handle still remained in his hand. "Jonathan," said Mr Witherington, after a long pause—"I wish to look at the last letter from New York, you will find it on my dressing-table."

Jonathan quitted the room without reply, and made his reappearance with the letter.

"It is a long time that I have been expecting this vessel, Jonathan," observed Mr Witherington, unfolding the letter.

"Yes, sir, a long while; *tempus fugit*," replied the butler in a low tone, half shutting his eyes.

"I hope to God no accident has happened," continued Mr Witherington; "my poor little cousin and her twins, e'en now that I speak, they may be all at the bottom of the sea."

"Yes, sir," replied the butler; "the sea defrauds many an honest undertaker of his profits."

"By the blood of the Witheringtons! I may be left without an heir, and shall be obliged to marry, which would be very uncomfortable."

"Very little comfort," echoed Jonathan—"my wife is dead. *In cœlo quies*."

"Well, we must hope for the best: but this suspense is anything but comfortable," observed Mr Witherington, after looking over the contents of the letter for at least the twentieth time.

"That will do, Jonathan; I'll ring for coffee presently:" and Mr Witherington was again alone, and with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling.

A cousin of Mr Witherington, and a very great favourite (for Mr Witherington, having a large fortune, and not having anything to do with business, was courted by his relations), had, to a certain degree, committed herself;

that is to say that, notwithstanding the injunctions of her parents, she had fallen in love with a young lieutenant in a marching regiment, whose pedigree was but respectable, and whose fortune was anything but respectable, consisting merely of a subaltern's pay. Poor men, unfortunately, always make love better than those who are rich, because, having less to care about, and not being puffed up with their own consequence, they are not so selfish, and think much more of the lady than of themselves. Young ladies, also, who fall in love, never consider whether there is sufficient to "make the pot boil"—probably because young ladies in love lose their appetites, and, not feeling inclined to eat at that time, they imagine that love will always supply the want of food. Now, we will appeal to the married ladies whether we are not right in asserting, that, although the collation spread for them and their friends on the day of the marriage is looked upon with almost loathing, they do not find their appetites return with interest soon afterwards. This was precisely the case with Cecilia Witherington, or rather Cecilia Templemore, for she had changed her name the day before. It was also the case with her husband, who always had a good appetite, even during his days of courtship; and the consequence was, that the messman's account, for they lived in barracks, was, in a few weeks, rather alarming. Cecilia applied to her family, who very kindly sent her word that she might starve: but, the advice neither suiting her nor her husband, she then wrote to her cousin Antony, who sent her word that he should be most happy to receive them at his table, and that they should take up their abode in Finsbury Square. This was exactly what they wished: but still there was a certain difficulty: Lieutenant Templemore's regiment was quartered in a town in Yorkshire, which was some trifling distance from Finsbury Square; and to be at Mr Witherington's dinner-table at six P.M., with the necessity of appearing at parade every morning at nine A.M., was a dilemma not to be got out of. Several letters were interchanged upon this knotty subject; and at last it was agreed that Mr Templemore should sell out, and come up to Mr Witherington with his pretty wife: he did so, and found that it was much more comfortable to turn out at nine o'clock in the morning to a good breakfast than to a martial parade. But Mr Templemore had an honest pride and independence of character which would not permit him to eat the bread of idleness, and, after a sojourn of two months in most comfortable quarters, without a messman's bill, he frankly stated his feelings to Mr Witherington, and requested his assistance to procure for himself an honourable livelihood. Mr Witherington, who had become attached to them both, would have remonstrated, observing that Cecilia was his own cousin, and that he was a confirmed bachelor: but, in this instance, Mr Templemore was firm, and Mr Witherington very unwillingly consented. A mercantile house of the highest respectability required a partner who could superintend their consignments to America. Mr Witherington advanced the sum required; and, in a few weeks, Mr and Mrs Templemore sailed for New York.

Mr Templemore was active and intelligent; their affairs prospered; and, in a few years, they anticipated a return to their native soil with a competence. But the autumn of the second year after their arrival proved very sickly; the yellow fever raged; and, among the thousands who were carried off, Mr Templemore was a victim, about three weeks after his wife had been brought to bed of twins. Mrs Templemore rose from her couch a widow and the mother of two fine boys. The loss of Mr Templemore was replaced by the establishment with which he was connected, and Mr Witherington offered to his cousin that asylum which, in her mournful and unexpected bereavement, she so much required. In three months her affairs were arranged; and, with her little boys hanging at the breasts of two negro nurses, for no others could be procured who would undertake the voyage, Mrs Templemore, with Coco as a male servant, embarked on board of the good ship *Circassian*, A. I., bound to Liverpool.

Chapter III

THE GALE

THOSE who, standing on the pier, had witnessed the proud bearing of the *Circassian* as she gave her canvas to the winds, little contemplated her fate ; still less did those on board ; for confidence is the characteristic of seamen, and they have the happy talent of imparting their confidence to whomever may be in their company. We shall pass over the voyage, confining ourselves to a description of the catastrophe.

It was during a gale from the north-west, which had continued for three days, and by which the *Circassian* had been driven into the Bay of Biscay, that, at about twelve o'clock at night, a slight lull was perceptible. The captain, who had remained on deck, sent down for the chief mate. "Oswald," said Captain Ingram, "the gale is breaking, and I think before morning we shall have had the worst of it. I shall lie down for an hour or two : call me if there be any change."

Oswald Bareth, a tall, sinewy-built, and handsome specimen of transatlantic growth, examined the whole circumference of the horizon before he replied. At last his eyes were steadily fixed to leeward : "I've a notion not, sir," said he ; "I see no signs of clearing off, to leeward ; only a lull for relief, and a fresh hand at the bellows, depend upon it."

"We have now had it three days," replied Captain Ingram, "and that's the life of a summer's gale."

"Yes," rejoined the mate ; "but always provided that it don't blow back again. I don't like the look of it, sir ; and have it back we shall, as sure as there's snakes in Virginny."

"Well, so be if so be," was the safe reply of the captain. "You must keep a sharp look-out, Bareth, and don't leave the deck to call me ; send a hand down."

The captain descended to his cabin. Oswald looked at the compass in the bittacle—spoke a few words to the man at the helm—gave one or two terrible kicks in the ribs to some of the men who were *caulking*—sounded the pump-well—put a fresh quid of tobacco into his cheek, and then proceeded to examine the heavens above. A cloud, much darker and more descending than the others which obscured the firmament, spread over the zenith, and based itself upon the horizon to leeward. Oswald's eye had been fixed upon it but a few seconds, when he beheld a small lambent gleam of lightning pierce through the most opaque part; then another, and more vivid. Of a sudden the wind lulled, and the *Circassian* righted from her careen. Again the wind howled—and again the vessel was pressed down to her bearings by its force: again another flash of lightning, which was followed by a distant peal of thunder.

"Had the worst of it, did you say, captain? I've a notion that the worst is yet to come;" muttered Oswald, still watching the heavens.

How does she carry her helm, Matthew?" inquired Oswald, walking aft.

"Spoke a-weather."

"I'll have that trysail off of her, at any rate," continued the mate. "Aft, there, my lads! and lower down the trysail. Keep the sheet fast till it's down, or the flogging will frighten the lady-passenger out of her wits. Well, if ever I own a craft, I'll have no women on board. Dollars shan't tempt me."

The lightning now played in rapid forks; and the loud thunder, which instantaneously followed each flash, proved its near approach. A deluge of slanting rain descended—the wind lulled—roared again—then lulled—shifted a point or two, and the drenched and heavy sails flapped.

"Up with the helm, Mat!" cried Oswald, as a near flash of lightning for a moment blinded, and the accompanying peal of thunder deafened, those on deck. Again the wind blew strong—it ceased, and it was a dead calm.

The sails hung down from the yards, and the rain descended in perpendicular torrents, while the ship rocked to and fro in the trough of the sea, and the darkness became suddenly intense.

"Down, there, one of you! and call the captain," said Oswald. "By the Lord! we shall have it. Main braces there, men, and square the yards. Be smart! That topsail should have been in," muttered the mate; "but I'm not captain. Square away the yards, my lads!" continued he; "quick, quick!—there's no child's play here!"

Owing to the difficulty of finding and passing the ropes to each other, from the intensity of the darkness, and the deluge of rain which blinded them, the men were not able to execute the order of the mate so soon as it was necessary; and before they could accomplish their task, or Captain Ingram could gain the deck, the wind suddenly burst upon the devoted vessel from the quarter directly opposite to that from which the gale had blown, taking her all a-back, and throwing her on her beam-ends. The man at the helm was hurled over the wheel; while the rest, who were with Oswald at the main bits, with the coils of ropes, and every other article on deck not secured, were rolled into the scuppers, struggling to extricate themselves from the mass of confusion and the water in which they floundered. The sudden revulsion awoke all the men below, who imagined that the ship was foundering; and, from the only hatchway not secured, they poured up in their shirts, with their other garments in their hands, to put them on—if fate permitted.

Oswald Bareth was the first who clambered up from to leeward. He gained the helm, which he put hard up. Captain Ingram and some of the seamen also gained the helm. It is the rendezvous of all good seamen in emergencies of this description: but the howling of the gale—the blinding of the rain and salt spray—the seas checked in their running by the shift of wind, and breaking over the ship in vast masses of water—the tremendous peals of thunder—and the intense darkness which accompanied these horrors, added to the inclined position of the vessel, which obliged them to climb from one part of the deck to another, for some time checked all profitable communication. Their only friend in this conflict of the elements was the lightning (unhappy, indeed, the situation in which lightning can be welcomed as a friend); but its vivid and forked flames, darting down upon every quarter of the horizon, enabled them to perceive their situation: and awful as it was, when momentarily presented to their sight, it was not so awful as darkness and uncertainty. To those who have been accustomed to the difficulties and dangers of a sea-faring life, there are no lines which speak more forcibly to the imagination, or prove the beauty and power of the Greek poet, than those in the noble prayer of Ajax:—

"Lord of earth and air,
O king! O father! hear my humble prayer.
Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore;
Give me to see—and Ajax asks no more.
If Greece must perish—we thy will obey:
But *let us perish in the face of day!*"

Oswald gave the helm to two of the seamen, and with his knife cut adrift the axes, which were lashed round the mizen-mast in painted canvas covers. One he retained for himself,—the others he put into the hands of the boatswain and the second mate. To speak so as to be heard was almost impossible, from the tremendous roaring of the wind; but the lamp still burned in the bittacle, and, by its feeble light, Captain Ingram could distinguish the signs made by the mate, and could give his consent. It was necessary that the ship should be put before the wind, and the helm had no power over her. In a short time the lanyards of the mizen rigging were severed, and the mizen-mast went over the side, almost unperceived by the crew on the other parts of the deck, or even those near, had it not been from blows received by those who were too close to it, from the falling of the topsail-sheets and the rigging about the mast.

Oswald, with his companions, regained the bittacle, and for some little while watched the compass. The ship did not pay off, and appeared to settle down more into the water. Again Oswald made his signs, and again the captain gave his assent. Forward sprang the undaunted mate, clinging to the bulwark and belaying-pins, and followed by his hardy companions, until they had all three gained the main-channels. Here, their exposure to the force of the breaking waves, and the stoutness of the ropes yielding but slowly to the blows of the axes, which were used almost under water, rendered the service one of extreme difficulty and danger. The boatswain was washed over the bulwark and dashed to leeward, where the lee-rigging only saved him from a watery grave. Unsubdued, he again climbed up to windward, rejoined and assisted his companions. The last blow was given by Oswald—the lanyards flew through the dead-eyes—and the tall mast disappeared in the foaming seas. Oswald and his companions hastened from their dangerous position, and rejoined the captain, who, with many of the crew, still remained near the wheel. The ship now slowly paid off and righted. In a few minutes she was flying before the gale, rolling heavily, and occasionally striking upon the wrecks of the mast, which she towed with her by the lee-rigging.

Although the wind blew with as much violence as before, still it was not with the same noise, now that the ship was before the wind with her after-masts gone. The next service was to clear the ship of the wrecks of the masts; but, although all now assisted, but little could be effected until the day had dawned, and even then it was a service of danger, as the ship rolled gunwale under. Those who performed the duty were slung in ropes, that they might not be washed away; and hardly was it completed, when a heavy roll, assisted by a jerking heave from a sea which struck her on the chess-tree, sent the foremast over the starboard cat-head. Thus was the *Circassian* dismasted in the gale.

Chapter IV

THE LEAK

THE wreck of the foremast was cleared from the ship; the gale continued; but the sun shone brightly and warmly. The *Circassian* was again brought to the wind. All danger was now considered to be over, and the seamen joked and laughed as they were busied in preparing jury-masts, to enable them to reach their destined port.

"I wouldn't have cared so much about this spree," said the boatswain, if it warn't for the mainmast; it was such a beauty. There's not another stick to be found equal to it in the whole length of the Mississippi."

"Bah! man," replied Oswald, "there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and as good sticks growing as ever were felled; but I guess we'll pay pretty dear for our spars when we get to Liverpool—but that concerns the owners."

The wind, which, at the time of its sudden change to the southward and eastward, had blown with the force of a hurricane, now settled into a regular strong gale, such as sailors are prepared to meet and laugh at. The sky was also bright and clear, and they had not the danger of a lee shore. It was a delightful change after a night of darkness, danger, and confusion; and the men worked that they might get sufficient sail on the ship to steady her, and enable them to shape a course.

"I suppose, now that we have the trysail on her forward, the captain will be for running for it," observed one who was busy turning in a dead-eye.

"Yes," replied the boatswain; "and with this wind on our quarter we shan't want much sail, I've a notion."

"Well, then, one advantage in losing your masts—you haven't much trouble about the rigging."

"Trouble enough, though, Bill, when we get in," replied another, gruffly: "new lower rigging to parcel and sarve, and every block to turn in afresh."

"Never mind, longer in port—I'll get spliced."

"Why, how often do you mean to get spliced, Bill? you've a wife in every State, to my sartain knowledge."

"I arn't got one at Liverpool, Jack."

"Well, you may take one there, Bill; for you've been sweet upon that nigger girl for these last three weeks."

"Any port in a storm, but she won't do for harbour duty; but the fact is, you're all wrong there, Jack. It's the babbies I likes—I likes to see them both together, hanging at the nigger's breasts. I always thinks of two spider monkeys nursing two kittens."

"I knows the women, but I never knows the children. It's just six of one and half-a-dozen of the other, an't it, Bill?"

"Yes; like two bright bullets out of the same mould: I say, Bill, did any of your wives ever have twins?"

"No; nor I don't intend, until the owners give us double pay."

"By-the-bye," interrupted Oswald, who had been standing under the weather bulk-head, listening to the conversation, and watching the work in progress, "we may just as well see if she has made any water with all this straining and buffeting. By the Lord! I never thought of that. Carpenter, lay down your adze and sound the well."

The carpenter, who, notwithstanding the uneasiness of the dismasted vessel, was performing his important share of the work, immediately complied with the order. He drew up the rope-yarn, to which an iron rule had been suspended, and lowered down into the pump-well, and perceived that the water was dripping from it. Imagining that it must have been wet from the quantity of water shipped over all, the carpenter disengaged the rope-yarn from the rule, drew another from the junk lying on the deck, which the seamen were working up, and then carefully proceeded to plumb the well. He hauled it up, and, looking at it for some moments aghast, exclaimed "*Seven feet* water in the hold, by G—d!"

If the crew of the *Circassian*, the whole of which were on deck, had been struck with an electric shock, the sudden change in their countenances could not have been greater than was produced by this appalling intelligence.

Heap upon sailors every disaster, every danger which can be accumulated from the waves, the wind, the elements, or the enemy, and they will bear up against them with a courage amounting to heroism. All they demand is, that the one plank "between them and death" is sound, and they will trust to their own energies, and will be confident in their own skill: but *spring a leak*, and they are half paralysed; and if it gain upon them, they are subdued; for when they find that their exertions are futile, they are little better than children.

Oswald sprang to the pumps, when he heard the carpenter's report. "Try again, Abel—it cannot be: cut away that line; hand us here a dry rope-yarn."

Once more the well was sounded by Oswald, and the results were the same. "We must rig the pumps, my lads," said the mate, endeavouring to conceal his own fears; "half this water must have found its way in her when she was on her beam-ends."

This idea, so judiciously thrown out, was caught at by the seamen, who hastened to obey the order, while Oswald went down to acquaint the captain, who, worn out with watching and fatigue, had, now that danger was considered to be over, thrown himself into his cot to obtain a few hours' repose.

"Do you think, Bareth, that we have sprung a leak?" said the captain, earnestly; "she never could have taken in that quantity of water."

"Never, sir," replied the mate; "but she has been so strained that she may have opened her topsides. I trust it is no worse."

"What is your opinion, then?"

"I am afraid that the wreck of the masts have injured her: you may recollect how often we struck against them before we could clear ourselves of them; once particularly, the main-mast appeared to be right under her bottom, I recollect, and she struck very heavy on it."

"Well, it is God's will: let us get on deck as fast as we can."

When they arrived on deck, the carpenter walked up to the captain, and quietly said to him, "*Seven feet three, sir.*" The pumps were then in full action; the men had divided, by the directions of the boatswain, and, stripped naked to the waist, relieved each other every two minutes. For half an hour they laboured incessantly.

This was the half-hour of suspense: the great point to be ascertained was, whether she leaked through the topsides, and had taken in the water during the second gale; if so, there was every hope of keeping it under. Captain Ingram and the mate remained in silence near the capstern, the former with his watch in his hand, during the time that the sailors exerted themselves to the utmost. It was ten minutes past seven when the half-hour had expired; the well was sounded, and the line carefully measured—*seven feet six inches!* So that the water had gained upon them, notwithstanding they had plied the pumps to the utmost of their strength.

A mute look of despair was exchanged among the crew, but it was followed up by curses and execrations. Captain Ingram remained silent, with his lips compressed.

"It's all over with us!" exclaimed one of the men.

"Not yet, my lads; we have one more chance," said Oswald; "I've a notion that the ship's sides have been opened by the infernal straining of last night, and that she is now taking it in at the topsides generally: if so we have only to put her before the wind again, and have another good spell at the pumps. When no longer strained, as she is now with her broadside to the sea, she will close all up again."

"I shouldn't wonder if Mr Bareth is not right," replied the carpenter; "however, that's my notion too."

"And mine," added Captain Ingram. "Come, my men! never say die while there's a shot in the locker. Let's try her again." And, to encourage the men, Captain Ingram threw off his coat and assisted at the first spell, while Oswald went to the helm and put the ship before the wind.

As the *Circassian* rolled before the gale, the lazy manner in which she righted proved how much water there was in the hold. The seamen exerted themselves for a whole hour without intermission, and the well was again sounded—*eight feet!*

The men did not assert that they would pump no longer; but they too plainly showed their intentions by each resuming in silence his shirt and jacket, which he had taken off at the commencement of his exertions.

"What's to be done, Oswald?" said Captain Ingram, as they walked aft. "You see the men will pump no longer; nor, indeed, would it be of any use. We are doomed."

"The *Circassian* is, sir, I am afraid," replied the mate: "pumping is of no avail; they could not keep her afloat till daybreak. We must, therefore, trust to our boats, which I believe to be all sound, and quit her before night."

"Crowded boats in such a sea as this!" replied Captain Ingram, shaking his head mournfully—

"Are bad enough, I grant; but better than the sea itself. All we can do now is to try and keep the men sober, and if we can do so it will be better than to fatigue them uselessly; they'll want all their strength before they put foot again upon dry land—if ever they are so fortunate. Shall I speak to them?"

"Do, Oswald," replied the captain; "for myself I care little, God knows; but my wife—my children!"

"My lads," said Oswald, going forward to the men, who had waited in moody silence the result of the conference—"as for pumping any longer, it would be only wearing out your strength for no good. We must now look to our boats; and a good boat is better than a bad ship. Still, this gale and cross-running sea are rather too much for boats at present; we had therefore better stick to the ship as long as we can. Let us set to with a will and get the boats ready, with provisions, water, and what else may be needful, and then we must trust to God's mercy and our own endeavours."

"No boat can stand this sea," observed one of the men; "I'm of opinion, as it's to be a short life, it may as well be a merry one. What d'ye say, my lads?" continued he, appealing to the men.

Several of the crew were of the same opinion; but Oswald, stepping forward, seized one of the axes which lay at the main-bitts, and going up to the seaman who had spoken, looked him steadfastly in the face :—

"Williams," said the mate, "a short life it may be to all of us, but not a merry one; the meaning of which I understand very well. Sorry I shall be to have your blood, or that of others, on my hands; but as sure as there's a heaven, I'll cleave to the shoulder the first man who attempts to break into the spirit-room. You know I never joke. Shame upon you! Do you call yourselves men, when, for the sake of a little liquor now, you would lose your only chance of getting drunk every day, as soon as we get on shore again? There's a time for all things; and I've a notion this is a time to be sober."

As most of the crew sided with Oswald, the weaker party were obliged to submit, and the preparations were commenced. The two boats on the booms were found to be in good condition. One party was employed cutting away the bulwarks, that the boats might be launched over the side, as there were no means of hoisting them out. The well was again sounded. Nine feet water in the hold, and the ship evidently settling fast. Two hours had now passed, and the gale was not so violent, the sea, also, which, at the change of wind, had been cross, appeared to have recovered its regular run. All was ready; the sailors, once at work again, had in some measure recovered their spirits, and were buoyed up with fresh hopes at the slight change in their favour from the decrease of the wind. The two boats were quite large enough to contain the whole of the crew and passengers; but, as the sailors said among themselves (proving the kindness of their hearts), "What was to become of those two poor babbies, in an open boat for days and nights, perhaps?" Captain Ingram had gone down to Mrs Templemore, to impart to her their melancholy prospects; and the mother's heart, as well as the mother's voice, echoed the words of the seamen, "What will become of my poor babes?"

It was not till nearly six o'clock in the evening that all was ready; the ship was slowly brought to the wind again, and the boats launched over the side. By this time the gale was much abated; but the vessel was full of water, and was expected soon to go down.

There is no time in which coolness and determination are more required than in a situation like the one which we have attempted to describe. It is impossible to know the precise moment at which a water-logged vessel, in a heavy sea, may go down; and its occupants are in a state of mental fever, with the idea of their remaining in her so late that she will suddenly submerge, and leave them to struggle in the waves. This feeling actuated many of the crew of the *Circassian*, and they had already retreated to the boats. All was arranged; Oswald had charge of one boat, and it was agreed that the larger should receive Mrs Templemore and her children, under the protection of Captain Ingram. The number appointed to Oswald's boat being completed, he shoved off, to make room for the other, and laid to to leeward, waiting to keep company. Mrs Templemore came up with Captain Ingram, and was assisted by him into the boat. The nurse, with one child, was at last placed by her side; Coco was leading Judy, the other nurse, with the remaining infant in her arms, and Captain Ingram, who had been obliged to go into the boat with the first child, was about to return to assist Judy with the other, when the ship gave a heavy pitch, and her forecastle was buried in the wave; at the same time the gunwale of the boat was stove by coming in contact with the side of the vessel. "She's down, by God!" exclaimed the alarmed seamen in the boat, shoving off to escape from the vortex.

Captain Ingram, who was standing on the boat's thwarts to assist Judy, was thrown back into the bottom of the boat; and, before he could extricate himself, the boat was separated from the ship, and had drifted to leeward.

"My child!" screamed the mother; "my child!"

"Pull to again, my lads!" cried Captain Ingram, seizing the tiller. The men, who had been alarmed at the idea that the ship was going down, now that they saw that she was still afloat, got out the oars and attempted to regain her, but in vain—they could not make head against the sea and wind. Further and further did they drift to leeward, notwithstanding their exertions; while the frantic mother extended her arms, imploring and entreating. Captain Ingram, who had stimulated the sailors to the utmost, perceived that further attempts were useless.

"My child! my child!" screamed Mrs Templemore, standing up, and holding out her arms towards the vessel. At a sign from the captain, the head of the boat was veered round. The bereaved mother knew that all hope was gone, and she fell down in a state of insensibility.

Chapter V

THE OLD MAID

One morning, shortly after the disasters which we have described, Mr Witherington descended to his breakfast-room somewhat earlier than usual, and found his green morocco easy-chair already tenanted by no less a personage than William, the footman, who, with his feet on the fender, was so attentively reading the newspaper that he did not hear his master's entrance. "By my ancestor, who fought on his stumps! but I hope you are quite comfortable, Mr William; nay, I beg I may not disturb you, sir."

William, although as impudent as most of his fraternity, was a little taken aback: "I beg your pardon, sir, but Mr Jonathan had not time to look over the paper."

"Nor is it required that he should, that I know of, sir."

"Mr Jonathan says, sir, that it is always right to look over the *deaths*, that news of that kind may not shock you."

"Very considerate, indeed!"

"And there is a story there, sir, about a shipwreck."

"A shipwreck! where, William? God bless me! where is it?"

"I am afraid it is the same ship you are so anxious about, sir,—the ——; I forget the name, sir."

Mr Witherington took the newspaper, and his eye soon caught the paragraph in which the rescue of the two negroes and child from the wreck of the *Circassian* was fully detailed.

"It is, indeed!" exclaimed Mr Witherington; "my poor Cecilia in an open boat! one of the boats was seen to go down,—perhaps she's dead—merciful God! one boy saved. Mercy on me! where's Jonathan?"

"Here, sir," replied Jonathan, very solemnly, who had just brought in the eggs, and now stood erect as a mute behind his master's chair, for it was a case of danger, if not of death.

"I must go to Portsmouth immediately after breakfast—sha'n't eat though—appetite all gone."

"People seldom do, sir, on these melancholy occasions," replied Jonathan; "will you take your own carriage, sir, or a mourning coach?"

"A mourning coach at fourteen miles an hour, with two pair of horses! Jonathan, you're crazy."

"Will you please to have black silk hatbands and gloves for the coachman and servants who attend you, sir?"

"Confound your shop! no; this is a resurrection, not a death: it appears that the negro thinks only one of the boats went down."

"*Mors omnia vincit*," quoth Jonathan, casting up his eyes.

"Never you mind that; mind your own business. That's the postman's knock—see if there are any letters."

There were several; and, amongst the others, there was one from Captain Maxwell, of the *Eurydice*, detailing the circumstances already known, and informing Mr Witherington that he had despatched the two negroes and the child to his address by that day's coach, and that one of the officers, who was going to town by the same conveyance, would see them safe to his house.

Captain Maxwell was an old acquaintance of Mr Witherington—had dined at his house in company with the Templemores, and therefore had extracted quite enough information from the negroes to know where to direct them.

"By the blood of my ancestors! they'll be here to-night," cried Mr Witherington; "and I have saved my journey. What is to be done? better tell Mary to get rooms ready: d'ye hear, William? beds for one little boy and two niggers."

"Yes, sir," replied William; "but where are the black people to be put?"

"Put! I don't care; one may sleep with cook, the other with Mary."

"Very well, sir, I'll tell them," replied William, hastening away, delighted at the row which he anticipated in the kitchen.

"If you please, sir," observed Jonathan, "one of the negroes is, I believe, a man."

"Well, what then?"

"Only, sir, the maids may object to sleep with him."

"By all the plagues of the Witheringtons! that is true;

well, you may take him, Jonathan — you like that colour."

"Not in the dark, sir," replied Jonathan with a bow.

"Well, then, let them sleep together: so, that affair is settled."

"Are they man and wife, sir?" said the butler.

"The devil take them both! how should I know? let me have my breakfast, and we'll talk over the matter by-and-bye."

Mr Witherington applied to his eggs and muffin, eating his breakfast as fast as he could, without knowing why; but the reason was that he was puzzled and perplexed with the anticipated arrival, and longed to think quietly over the dilemma, for it was a dilemma to an old bachelor. As soon as he had swallowed his second cup of tea, he put himself into his easy-chair, in an easy attitude, and was very soon soliloquising as follows:—

"By the blood of the Witheringtons! what am I, an old bachelor, to do with a baby and a wet-nurse as black as the ace of spades, and another black fellow in the bargain? Send him back again? yes, that's best: but the child—woke every morning at five o'clock with its squalling—obliged to kiss it three times a-day—pleasant!—and then that nigger of a nurse—thick lips—kissing child all day, and then holding it up to me—ignorant as a cow—if child has the stomach-ache she'll cram a pepper-pod down its throat—West India fashion—children never without the stomach-ache—my poor, poor cousin!—what has become of her and the other child, too?—wish they may pick her up, poor dear! and then she will come and take care of her own children—don't know what to do—great mind to send for sister Moggy—but she's so *fussy*—won't be in a hurry. Think again."

Here Mr Witherington was interrupted by two taps at the door.

"Come in," said he; and the cook, with her face as red as if she had been dressing a dinner for eighteen, made her appearance without the usual clean apron.

"If you please, sir," said she, curtseying, "I will thank you to suit yourself with another cook."

"Oh, very well," replied Mr Witherington, angry at the interruption.

"And, if you please, sir, I should like to go this very day—indeed, sir, I shall not stay."

"Go to the devil! if you please," replied Mr Witherington, angrily; "but first go out and shut the door after you."

The cook retired, and Mr Witherington was again alone.

"Confound the old woman—what a huff she is in! won't cook for black people, I suppose—yes, that's it."

Here Mr Witherington was again interrupted by a second double tap at the door.

"Oh! thought better of it, I suppose. Come in."

It was not the cook, but Mary, the housemaid, that entered.

"If you please, sir," said she, whimpering, "I should wish to leave my situation."

"A conspiracy, by heavens! Well, you may go."

"To-night, sir, if you please," answered the woman.

"This moment, for all I care!" exclaimed Mr Witherington in his wrath.

The housemaid retired; and Mr Witherington took some time to compose himself.

"Servants all going to the devil in this country," said he at last; "proud fools—won't clean rooms after black people, I suppose—yes, that's it—confound them all, black and white! here's my whole establishment upset by the arrival of a baby—well, it is very uncomfortable—what shall I do!—send for sister Moggy!—no, I'll send for Jonathan."

Mr Witherington rang the bell, and Jonathan made his appearance.

"What is all this, Jonathan?" said he; "cook angry—Mary crying—both going away—what's it all about?"

"Why, sir, they were told by William that it was your positive order that the two black people were to sleep with them; and I believe he told Mary that the man was to sleep with her."

"Confound that fellow! he's always at mischief: you know, Jonathan, I never meant that."

"I thought not, sir, as it is quite contrary to custom," replied Jonathan.

"Well, then, tell them so, and let's hear no more about it."

Mr Witherington then entered into a consultation with his butler, and acceded to the arrangements proposed by him. The parties arrived in due time, and were properly accommodated. Master Edward was not troubled with the stomach-ache, neither did he wake Mr Witherington at five o'clock in the morning; and, after all, it was not so very uncomfortable. But, although things were not quite so uncomfortable as Mr Witherington had anticipated, still they were not comfortable; and Mr Witherington was annoyed by continual skirmishes between his servants, complaints from Judy, in bad English, of the cook, who, it must be owned, had taken a prejudice against her and Coco, occasional illness of the child, et cetera, that he found his house no longer quiet and peaceable. Three months had now nearly passed, and no tidings of the boats had been received; and Captain Maxwell, who came up to see Mr Witherington, gave it as his decided opinion that they must have foundered in the gale. As, therefore, there appeared to be no chance of Mrs Templemore coming to take care of her child, Mr Witherington at last resolved to write to Bath, where his sister resided, and acquaint her with the whole story, requesting her to come and superintend his domestic concerns. A few days afterwards he received the following reply:

"*Bath, August.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER ANTONY,—"Your letter arrived safe to hand on Wednesday last, and I must say that I was not a little surprised at its contents; indeed, I thought so much about it that I revoked at Lady Betty Blabkin's whist-party, and lost four shillings and sixpence. You say that you have a child at your house belonging to your cousin, who married in so indecorous a manner. I hope what you say is true: but, at the same time, I know what bachelors are guilty of; although, as Lady Betty says, it is better never to talk or even to hint about these improper things. I cannot imagine why men should consider themselves, in an unmarried state, as absolved from that purity which maidens are so careful to preserve: and so says Lady Betty, with whom I had a little conversation on the subject. As, however, the thing is done, she agrees with me that it is better to hush it up as well as we can.

"I presume that you do not intend to make the child your heir, which I should consider as highly improper; and, indeed Lady Betty tells me that the legacy-duty is ten per cent., and that it cannot be avoided. However, I make it a rule never to talk about these sort of things. As for your request that I will come up and superintend your establishment, I have advised with Lady Betty on the subject, and she agrees with me that, for the honour of the family, it is better that I should come, as it will save appearances. You are in a peck of troubles, as most men are who are free livers, and are led astray by artful and alluring females. However, as Lady Betty says, 'the least said the soonest mended.'

"I will, therefore, make the necessary arrangements for letting my house, and hope to join you in about ten days; sooner I cannot, as I find that my engagements extend to that period. Many questions have already been put to me on this unpleasant subject; but I always give but one answer, which is, that bachelors will be bachelors; and that, at all events, it is not so bad as if you were a married man; for I make it a rule never to talk about, or even to hint about, these sort of things, for, as Lady Betty says, 'Men will get into scrapes, and the sooner things are hushed up the better.' So no more at present from your affectionate sister,

"MARGARET WITHERINGTON.

"P.S.—Lady Betty and I both agree that you are very right in hiring two black people to bring the child into your house, as it makes the thing look *foreign* to the neighbours, and we can keep our own secrets.

"M. W."

"Now, by all the sins of the Witheringtons, if this is not enough to drive a man out of his senses!—Confound the suspicious old maid!—I'll not let her come into this house. Confound Lady Betty, and all scandal-loving old tabbies like her! Bless me!" continued Mr Witherington, throwing the letter on the table, with a deep sigh, "this is anything but comfortable."

But if Mr Witherington found it anything but comfortable at the commencement, he found it unbearable in the sequel.

His sister Moggy arrived, and installed herself in the house with all the pomp and protecting air of one who was the saviour of her brother's reputation and character. When the child was first brought down to her, instead of perceiving at once its likeness to Mr Templemore, which was very strong, she looked at it and at her brother's face with her only eye, and, shaking her finger, exclaimed—

"Oh, Antony! Antony! and did you expect to deceive me?—the nose—the mouth exact—Antony, for shame! fie, for shame!"

But we must hurry over the misery that Mr Witherington's kindness and benevolence brought upon him. Not a day passed—scarcely an hour, without his ears being galled with his sister's insinuations. Judy and Coco were sent back to America; the servants, who had remained so long in his service, gave warning one by one, and, afterwards, were changed as often almost as there was a change in the moon. She ruled the house and her brother despotically; and all poor Mr Witherington's comfort was gone, until the time arrived when Master Edward was to be sent to school. Mr Witherington then plucked up courage; and, after a few stormy months, drove his sister back to Bath, and once more found himself comfortable.

Edward came home during the holidays, and was a great favourite; but the idea had become current that he was the son of the old gentleman, and the remarks made were so unpleasant and grating to him, that he was not sorry, much as he was attached to the boy, when he declared his intention to choose the profession of a sailor.

Captain Maxwell introduced him into the service; and afterwards, when, in consequence of ill health and exhaustion, he was himself obliged to leave it for a time, he procured for his protégé other ships. We must, therefore, allow some years to pass away, during which time Edward Templemore pursues his career — Mr Witherington grows older and more particular, and his sister Moggy amuses herself with Lady Betty's remarks, and her darling game of whist.

During all this period, no tidings of the boats, or of Mrs Templemore and her infant, had been heard; it was, therefore, naturally conjectured that they had all perished, and they were remembered but as things that had been.

Chapter VI

THE MIDSHIPMAN

The weather side of the quarter-deck of H.M. frigate *Unicorn* was occupied by two very great personages: Captain Plumbton, commanding the ship, who was very great in width if not in height, taking much more than his allowance of the deck, if it were not that he was the proprietor thereof, and entitled to the lion's share. Captain P. was not more than four feet ten inches in height; but then he was equal to that in girth: there was quite enough of him, if he had only been *rolled out*. He walked with his coat flying open, his thumbs stuck into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, so as to throw his shoulders back and increase his horizontal dimensions. He also held his head well aft, which threw his chest and stomach well forward. He was the prototype of pomposity and good-nature, and he strutted like an actor in a procession.

The other personage was the first lieutenant, whom nature had pleased to fashion in another mould. He was as tall as the captain was short—as thin as his superior was corpulent. His long lanky legs were nearly up to the captain's shoulders; and he bowed down over the head of his superior, as if he were the crane to hoist up, and the captain the bale of goods to be hoisted. He carried his hands behind his back, with two fingers twisted together; and his chief difficulty appeared to be to reduce his own stride to the parrot march of the captain. His features were sharp and lean as was his body, and wore every appearance of a cross-grained temper.

He had been making divers complaints of divers persons, and the captain had hitherto appeared imperturbable. Captain Plumbton was an even-tempered man, who was satisfied with a good dinner. Lieutenant Markitall was an odd-tempered man, who would quarrel with his bread and butter.

"Quite impossible, sir," continued the first lieutenant, "to carry on the duty without support."

This oracular observation, which, from the relative forms of the two parties, descended as it were from above, was replied to by the captain with a "Very true."

"Then, sir, I presume you will not object to my putting that man in the report for punishment."

"I'll think about it, Mr Markitall." This, with Captain Plumbton, was as much as to say, no.

"The young gentlemen, sir, I am sorry to say, are very troublesome."

"Boys always are," replied the captain.

"Yes, sir; but the duty must be carried on, and I cannot do without them."

"Very true—midshipmen are very useful."

"But I am sorry to say, sir, that they are not. Now, sir, there's Mr Templemore; I can do nothing with him—he does nothing but laugh."

"Laugh!—Mr Markitall, does he laugh at you?"

"Not exactly, sir; but he laughs at everything. If I send him to the mast-head, he goes up laughing; if I call him down, he comes down laughing; if I find fault with him, he laughs the next minute: in fact, sir, he does nothing but laugh. I should particularly wish, sir, that you would speak to him, and see if any interference on your part——"

"Would make him cry—eh? better to laugh than cry in this world. Does he never cry, Mr Markitall?"

"Yes, sir, and very unseasonably. The other day, you may recollect, when you punished Wilson the marine, whom I appointed to take care of his chest and hammock, he was crying the whole time; almost tantamount—at least an indirect species of mutiny on his part, as it implied——"

"That the boy was sorry that his servant was punished; I never flog a man but I'm sorry myself, Mr Markitall."

"Well, I do not press the question of his crying—that I might look over; but his laughing, sir, I must beg that you will take notice of that. Here he is, sir, coming up the hatchway. Mr Templemore, the captain wishes to speak to you."

Now, the captain did not wish to speak to him, but, forced upon him as it was by the first lieutenant, he could do no less. So Mr Templemore touched his hat and stood before the captain, we regret to say, with such a good-humoured, sly, confiding smirk on his countenance, as at once established the proof of the accusation, and the enormity of the offence.

"So, sir," said Captain Plumbton, stopping in his perambulation, and squaring his shoulders still more, "I find that you laugh at the first lieutenant."

"I, sir?" replied the boy, the smirk expanding into a broad grin.

"Yes; you, sir," said the first lieutenant, now drawing up to his full height; "why, you're laughing now, sir."

"I can't help it, sir—it's not my fault; and I'm sure it's not yours, sir," added the boy, demurely.

"Are you aware, Edward—Mr Templemore, I mean—of the impropriety of disrespect to your superior officer?"

"I never laughed at Mr Markitall but once, sir, that I can recollect, and that was when he tumbled over the messenger."

"And why did you laugh at him then, sir."

"I always do laugh when anyone tumbles down," replied the lad; "I can't help it, sir."

"Then, sir, I suppose you would laugh if you saw me rolling in the lee scuppers?" said the captain.

"Oh!" replied the boy, no longer able to contain himself, "I'm sure I should burst myself with laughing—I think I see you now, sir."

"Do you, indeed! I'm very glad that you do not; though I'm afraid, young gentleman, you stand convicted by your own confession."

"Yes, sir, of laughing, if that is any crime; but it's not in the articles of war."

"No, sir; but disrespect is. You laugh when you go to the mast-head."

"But I obey the order, sir, immediately—do I not, Mr Markitall?"

"Yes, sir, you obey the order; but, at the same time, your laughing proves that you do not mind the punishment."

"No more I do, sir. I spend half my life at the mast-head, and I'm used to it now."

"But, Mr Templemore, ought you not to feel the disgrace of the punishment?" inquired the captain, severely.

"Yes, sir, if I felt that I deserved it I should. I should not laugh, sir, if *you* sent me to the mast-head," replied the boy, assuming a serious countenance.

"You see, Mr Markitall, that he can be grave," observed the captain.

"I've tried all I can to make him so, sir," replied the first lieutenant; "but I wish to ask Mr Templemore what he means to imply by saying, 'when he deserves it.' Does he mean to say, that I have ever punished him unjustly?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy boldly; "five times out of six, I am mast-headed for nothing—and that's the reason why I do not mind it."

"For nothing, sir! Do you call laughing nothing?"

"I pay every attention that I can to my duty, sir; I always obey your orders: I try all I can to make you pleased with me—but you are always punishing me."

"Yes, sir, for laughing, and, what is worse, making the ship's company laugh."

"They 'haul and hold' just the same, sir—I think they work all the better for being merry."

"And pray, sir, what business have you to think?" replied the first lieutenant, now very angry. "Captain Plumbton, as this young gentleman thinks proper to interfere with me and the discipline of the ship, I beg you will see what effect your punishing may have upon him."

"Mr Templemore," said the captain, "you are, in the first place, too free in your speech, and, in the next place, too fond of laughing. There is, Mr Templemore, a time for all things—a time to be merry, and a time to be serious. The quarter-deck is not the fit place for mirth."

"I'm sure the gangway is not," shrewdly interrupted the boy.

"No—you are right, nor the gangway; but you may laugh on the forecastle, and when below with your messmates."

"No, sir, we may not; Mr Markitall always sends out if he hears us laughing."

"Because, Mr Templemore, you are always laughing."

"I believe I am, sir; and if it's wrong I'm sorry to displease you, but I mean no disrespect. I laugh in my sleep—I laugh when I awake—I laugh when the sun shines—I always feel so happy! but although you do mast-head me, Mr Markitall, I should not laugh, but be very sorry, if any misfortune happened to you."

"I believe you would, boy—I do, indeed, Mr Markitall," said the captain.

"Well, sir," replied the first lieutenant, "as Mr Templemore appears to be aware of his error, I do not wish to press my complaint—I have only to request that he will never laugh again."

"You hear, boy, what the first lieutenant says; it's very reasonable, and I beg I may hear no more complaints. Mr Markitall, let me know when the foot of that fore-topsail will be repaired—I should like to shift it to-night."

Mr Markitall went down under the half-deck to make the inquiry.

"And, Edward," said Captain Plumbton, as soon as the lieutenant was out of ear-shot, "I have a good deal more to say to you upon this subject, but I have no time now. So come and dine with me—at my table, you know, I allow laughing in moderation."

The boy touched his hat, and, with a grateful happy countenance, walked away.

We have introduced this little scene, that the reader may form some idea of the character of Edward Templemore. He was indeed the soul of mirth, good-humour, and kindly feelings towards others; he even felt kindly towards the first lieutenant, who persecuted him for his risible propensities. We do not say that the boy was right in laughing at all times, or that the first lieutenant was wrong in attempting to check it. As the captain said, there was a time for all things, and Edward's laugh was not always seasonable; but it was his nature, and he could not help it. He was joyous as the May morning; and thus he continued for years, laughing at everything—pleased with everybody—almost universally liked—and his bold, free, and happy spirit, unchecked by vicissitude or hardship.

He served his time—was nearly turned back, when he was passing his examination, for laughing, and then went laughing to sea again—was in command of a boat at the cutting out of a French corvette, and, when on board, was so much amused by the little French captain skipping about with his rapier, which proved fatal to many, that, at last, he received a pink from the little gentleman himself, which laid him on the deck. For this affair, and in consideration of his wound, he obtained his promotion to the rank of lieutenant—was appointed to a line-of-battle ship in the West Indies—laughed at the yellow fever—was appointed to the tender of that ship, a fine schooner, and was sent to cruise for prize-money for the admiral, and promotion for himself, if he could, by any fortunate encounter, be so lucky as to obtain it.

Chapter VII

SLEEPER'S BAY

On the western coast of Africa there is a small bay, which has received more than one name from its occasional visitors. That by which it was designated by the adventurous Portuguese, who first dared to cleave the waves of the southern Atlantic, has been forgotten with their lost maritime pre-eminence; the name allotted to it by the woolly-headed natives of the coast has never, perhaps, been ascertained: it is, however, marked down in some of the old English charts as Sleeper's Bay.

The main-land which, by its curvature, has formed this little dent on a coast possessing, and certainly at present requiring, few harbours, displays, perhaps, the least inviting of all prospects; offering to the view nothing but a shelving beach of dazzling white sand, backed with a few small hummocks beat up by the occasional fury of the Atlantic gales—arid, bare, and without the slightest appearance of vegetable life. The inland prospect is shrouded over by a dense mirage, through which here and there are to be discovered the stems of a few distant palm-trees, so broken and disjoined by refraction that they present to the imagination anything but the idea of foliage or shade. The water in the bay is calm and smooth as the polished mirror; not the smallest ripple is to be heard on the beach, to break through the silence of nature; not a breath of air sweeps over its glassy surface, which is heated with the intense rays of a vertical noon-day sun, pouring down a withering flood of light and heat; not a sea-bird is to be discovered wheeling on its flight, or balancing on its wing as it pierces the deep with its searching eye, ready to dart upon its prey. All is silence, solitude, and desolation, save that occasionally may be seen the fin of some huge shark, either sluggishly moving through the heated element, or stationary in the torpor of the mid-day heat. A site so sterile, so stagnant, so little adapted to human life, cannot well be conceived, unless, by flying to extremes, we were to portray the chilling blast, the transfixing cold, and "close-ribbed ice," at the frozen poles.

At the entrance of this bay, in about three fathoms water, heedless of the spring cable, which hung down as a rope which had fallen overboard, there floated, motionless as death, a vessel whose proportions would have challenged the unanimous admiration of those who could appreciate the merits of her build, had she been anchored in the most frequented and busy harbour of the universe. So beautiful were her lines, that you might almost have imagined her a created being that the ocean had been ordered to receive, as if fashioned by the Divine Architect, to add to the beauty and variety of His works; for, from the huge leviathan to the smallest of the finny tribe—from the towering albatross to the boding peterel of the storm—where could be found, among the winged or finned frequenters of the ocean, a form more appropriate, more fitting, than this specimen of human skill, whose beautiful model and elegant tapering spars were now all that could be discovered to break the meeting lines of the firmament and horizon of the offing.

Alas! she was fashioned, at the will of avarice, for the aid of cruelty and injustice; and now was even more nefariously employed. She had been a slaver—she was now the far-famed, still more dreaded, pirate-schooner, the *Avenger*.

Not a man-of-war which scoured the deep but had her instructions relative to this vessel, which had been so successful in her career of crime—not a trader in any portion of the navigable globe but whose crew shuddered at the mention of her name, and the remembrance of the atrocities which had been practised by her reckless crew. She had been everywhere—in the east, the west, the north, and the south, leaving a track behind her of rapine and of murder. There she lay, in motionless beauty; her low sides were painted black, with one small narrow riband of red—her raking masts were clean scraped—her top-masts, her cross-trees, caps, and even running-blocks, were painted in pure white. Awnings were spread fore and aft, to protect the crew from the powerful rays of the sun; her ropes were hauled taut; and in every point she wore the appearance of being under the control of seamanship and strict discipline. Through the clear, smooth water her copper shone brightly; and, as you looked over her taffrail down into the calm blue sea, you could plainly discover the sandy bottom beneath her, and the anchor which then lay under her counter. A small boat floated astern, the weight of the rope which attached her appearing, in the perfect calm, to draw her towards the schooner.

We must now go on board, and our first cause of surprise will be the deception relative to the tonnage of the schooner, when viewed from a distance. Instead of a small vessel of about ninety tons, we discover that she is upwards of two hundred; that her breadth of beam is enormous; and that those spars, which appeared so light and elegant, are of unexpected dimensions. Her decks are of narrow fir-planks, without the least spiring or rise; her ropes are of Manilla hemp, neatly secured to copper belaying-pins, and coiled down on the deck, whose whiteness is well contrasted with the bright green paint of her bulwarks; her capstern and binnacles are cased in fluted mahogany, and ornamented with brass; metal stanchions protect the skylights, and the bright muskets are arranged in front of the main-mast, while the boarding-pikes are lashed round the main-boom.

In the centre of the vessel, between the fore and main-masts, there is a long brass 32-pounder, fixed upon a carriage, revolving in a circle, and so arrranged that in bad weather it can be lowered down and *housed;* while on each side of her deck are mounted brass guns, of smaller calibre and of exquisite workmanship. Her build proves the skill of the architect; her fitting-out, a judgment in which nought has been sacrificed to, although everything has been directed by, taste; and her neatness and arrangement, that in the person of her commander, to the strictest discipline there is united the practical knowledge of a thorough seaman. How, indeed, otherwise could she have so long continued her lawless yet successful career? How could it have been possible to unite a crew of miscreants, who feared nor God nor man, most of whom had perpetrated foul murders, or had been guilty of even blacker iniquities? It was because he who commanded the vessel was so superior as to find in her no rivalry. Superior in talent, in knowledge of his profession, in courage, and, moreover, in physical strength—which in him was almost Herculean. Unfortunately, he was also superior to all in cruelty, and contempt of all injunctions, moral and divine.

What had been the early life of this person was but imperfectly known. It was undoubted that he had received an excellent education, and it was said that he was of an ancient border family, on the banks of the Tweed: by what chances he had become a pirate—by what errors he had fallen from his station in society, until he became an outcast, had never been revealed; it was only known that he had been some years employed in the slave trade, previous to his seizing this vessel and commencing his reckless career. The name by which he was known to the crew of the pirate vessel was "Cain," and well had he chosen this appellation; for had not his hand for more than three years been against every man's, and every man's hand against his? In person, he was above six feet high, with a breadth of shoulders and of chest denoting the utmost of physical force which, perhaps, has ever been allotted to man. His features would have been handsome, had they not been scarred with wounds; and, strange to say, his eye was mild, and of a soft blue. His mouth was well formed, and his teeth of a pearly white; the hair of his head was crisp and wavy, and his beard, which he wore, as did every person composing the crew of the pirate, covered the lower part of his face, in strong, waving, and continued curls. The proportions of his body were perfect; but, from their vastness, they became almost terrific. His costume was elegant, and well adapted to his form: linen trousers, and untanned yellow leather boots, such as are made at the Western Isles; a broad-striped cotton shirt; a red Cashmere shawl round his waist as a sash; a vest embroidered in gold tissue, with a jacket of dark velvet, and pendant gold buttons, hanging over his left shoulder, after the fashion of the Mediterranean seamen; a round Turkish skull-cap, handsomely embroidered; a pair of pistols, and a long knife in his sash, completed his attire.

The crew consisted in all of 165 men, of almost every nation; but it was to be remarked, that all those in authority were either Englishmen or from the northern countries: the others were chiefly Spaniards and Maltese. Still there were Portuguese, Brazilians, negroes, and others, who made up the complement, which, at the time we now speak, was increased by twenty-five additional hands. These were Kroumen, a race of blacks well known at present, who inhabit the coast near Cape Palmas, and are often employed by our men-of-war stationed on the coast, to relieve the English seamen from duties which would be too severe to those who were not inured to the climate. They are powerful athletic men, good sailors, of a happy, merry disposition, and, unlike other Africans, will work hard. Fond of the English, they generally speak the language sufficiently to be understood, and are very glad to receive a baptism when they come on board. The name first given them they usually adhere to as long as they live; and you will now on the coast meet with a Blucher, a Wellington, a Nelson, etc., who will wring swabs, or do any other of the meanest description of work, without feeling that it is discreditable to sponsorials so grand.

It is not to be supposed that these men had voluntarily come on board of the pirate; they had been employed in some British vessels, trading on the coasts, and had been taken out of them when the vessels were burnt, and the Europeans of the crews murdered. They had received a promise of reward if they did their duty; but, not expecting it, they waited for the earliest opportunity to make their escape.

The captain of the schooner is abaft, with his glass in his hand, occasionally sweeping the offing in expectation of a vessel heaving in sight; the officers and crew are lying down, or lounging listlessly about the decks, panting with the extreme heat, and impatiently waiting for the sea-breeze to fan their parched foreheads. With their rough beards and exposed chests, and their weather-beaten fierce countenances, they form a group which is terrible even in repose.

We must now descend into the cabin of the schooner. The fittings-up of this apartment are simple: on each side is a standing bed-place; against the after bulk-head is a large buffet, originally intended for glass and china, but now loaded with silver and gold vessels of every size and description, collected by the pirate from the different ships which he had plundered; the lamps are also of silver, and evidently had been intended to ornament the shrine of some Catholic saint.

In this cabin there are two individuals to whom we shall now direct the reader's attention. The one is a pleasant-countenanced good-humoured Krouman, who had been christened "Pompey the Great;" most probably on account of his large proportions. He wears a pair of duck trousers; the rest of his body is naked, and presents a sleek glossy skin, covering muscles which an anatomist or a sculptor would have viewed with admiration. The other is a youth of eighteen, or thereabouts, with an intelligent handsome countenance, evidently of European blood. There is, however, an habitually mournful cast upon his features: he is dressed much in the same way as we have described the captain, but the costume hangs more gracefully upon his slender yet well-formed limbs. He is seated on a sofa, fixed in the fore part of the cabin, with a book in his hand, which occasionally he refers to, and then lifts his eyes from, to watch the motions of the Krouman, who is busy in the office of steward, arranging and cleaning the costly articles in the buffet.

"Massa Francisco, dis really fine ting;" said Pompey, holding up a splendidly-embossed tankard which he had been rubbing.

"Yes," replied Francisco, gravely; "it is, indeed, Pompey."

"How Captain Cain came by dis?"

Francisco shook his head; and Pompey put his finger up to his mouth, his eyes, full of meaning, fixed upon Francisco.

At this moment the personage referred to was heard descending the companion-ladder. Pompey recommenced rubbing the silver, and Francisco dropped his eyes upon the book.

What was the tie which appeared to bind the captain to this lad was not known; but, as the latter had always accompanied and lived altogether with him, it was generally supposed that he was the captain's son; and he was as often designated by the crew as young Cain, as he was by his Christian name of Francisco. Still it was observed, that latterly they had frequently been heard in altercation, and that the captain was very suspicious of Francisco's movements.

"I beg I may not interrupt your conversation," said Cain, on entering the cabin; "the information you may obtain from a Krouman must be very important."

Francisco made no reply, but appeared to be reading his book. Cain's eyes passed from one to the other, as if to read their thoughts.

"Pray, what were you saying, Mr Pompey?"

"Me say, Massa captain! me only tell young massa dis very fine ting; ask where you get him—Massa Francisco no tell."

"And what might it be to you, you black scoundrel?" cried the captain, seizing the goblet, and striking the man with it a blow on the head which flattened the vessel, and at the same time felled the Krouman, powerful as he was, to the deck. The blood streamed, as the man slowly rose, stupefied and trembling from the violent concussion. Without saying a word, he staggered out of the cabin, and Cain threw himself on one of the lockers in front of the standing bed-place, saying, with a bitter smile, "So much for your intimates, Francisco!"

"Rather, so much for your cruelty and injustice towards an unoffending man," replied Francisco, laying his book on the table. "His question was an innocent one—for he knew not the particulars connected with the obtaining of that flagon."

"And you, I presume, do not forget them? Well, be it so, young man; but I warn you again—as I have warned you often—nothing but the remembrance of your mother has prevented me, long before this, from throwing your body to the sharks."

"What influence my mother's memory may have over you I know not; I only regret that, in any way, she had the misfortune to be connected with you."

"She had the influence," replied Cain, "which a woman must have over a man when they have for years swung in the same cot; but that is wearing off fast. I tell you so candidly: I will not allow even her memory to check me, if I find you continue your late course. You have shown disaffection before the crew—you have disputed my orders—and I have every reason to believe that you are now plotting against me."

"Can I do otherwise than show my abhorrence," replied Francisco, "when I witness such acts of horror, of cruelty—cold-blooded cruelty—as lately have been perpetrated. Why did you bring me here? and why do you now detain me? All I ask is, that you will allow me to leave the vessel. You are not my father; you have told me so."

"No, I am not your father; but you—are your mother's son."

"That gives you no right to have power over me, even if you had been married to my mother; which——"

"I was not."

"I thank God; for marriage with you would have been even greater disgrace."

"What!" cried Cain, starting up, seizing the young man by the neck, and lifting him off his seat as if he had been a puppet; "but no—I cannot forget your mother." Cain released Francisco, and resumed his seat on the locker.

"As you please," said Francisco, as soon as he had recovered himself; "it matters little whether I am brained by your own hand, or launched overboard as a meal for the sharks; it will be but one more murder."

"Mad fool! why do you tempt me thus?" replied Cain, again starting up and hastily quitting the cabin.

The altercation which we have just described was not unheard on deck, as the doors of the cabin were open, and the skylight removed to admit the air. The face of Cain was flushed as he ascended the ladder. He perceived his chief mate standing by the hatchway, and many of the men, who had been slumbering abaft, with their heads raised on their elbows, as if they had been listening to the conversation below.

"It will never do, sir," said Hawkhurst, the mate, shaking his head.

"No," replied the captain; "not if he were my own son. But what is to be done?—he knows no fear."

Hawkhurst pointed to the entering-port.

"When I ask your advice, you may give it," said the captain, turning gloomily away.

In the meantime Francisco paced the cabin in deep thought. Young as he was, he was indifferent to death; for he had no tie to render life precious. He remembered his mother, but not her demise; that had been concealed from him. At the age of seven he had sailed with Cain in a slaver, and had ever since continued with him. Until lately, he had been led to suppose that the captain was his father. During the years that he had been in the slave-trade, Cain had devoted much time to his education: it so happened that the only book which could be found on board of the vessel, when Cain first commenced teaching, was a Bible belonging to Francisco's mother. Out of this book he learned to read; and, as his education advanced, other books were procured. It may appear strange that the very traffic in which his reputed father was engaged did not corrupt the boy's mind; but, accustomed to it from his infancy, he had considered these negroes as another species—an idea fully warranted by the cruelty of the Europeans towards them.

There are some dispositions so naturally kind and ingenuous that even example and evil contact cannot debase them: such was the disposition of Francisco. As he gained in years and knowledge, he thought more and more for himself, and had already become disgusted with the cruelties practised upon the unfortunate negroes, when the slave-vessel was seized upon by Cain and converted into a pirate. At first, the enormities committed had not been so great; vessels had been seized and plundered, but life had been spared. In the course of crime, however, the descent is rapid: and as, from information given by those who had been released, the schooner was more than once in danger of being captured, latterly no lives had been spared; and but too often the murders had been attended with deeds even more atrocious.

Francisco had witnessed scenes of horror until his young blood curdled; he had expostulated to save, but in vain. Disgusted with the captain and the crew, and their deeds of cruelty, he had latterly expressed his opinions fearlessly, and defied the captain; for, in the heat of an altercation, Cain had acknowledged that Francisco was not his son.

Had any of the crew or officers expressed but a tithe of what had fallen from the bold lips of Francisco, they would have long before paid the forfeit of their temerity; but there was a feeling towards Francisco which could not be stifled in the breast of Cain—it was the feeling of association and habit. The boy had been his companion for years: and, from assuetude, had become, as it were, a part of himself. There is a principle in our natures which, even when that nature is most debased, will never leave us—that of requiring something to love—something to protect and watch over: it is shown towards a dog, or any other animal, if it cannot be lavished upon one of our own species. Such was the feeling which so forcibly held Cain towards Francisco; such was the feeling which had hitherto saved his life.

After having paced up and down for some time, the youth took his seat on the locker which the captain had quitted; his eye soon caught the head of Pompey, who looked into the cabin and beckoned with his finger.

Francisco rose, and, taking up a flagon from the buffet which contained some spirits, walked to the door, and, without saying a word, handed it to the Krouman.

"Massa Francisco," whispered Pompey, "Pompey say

—all Krouman say—suppose they run away, you go too. Pompey say—all Krouman say—suppose they try kill you! Nebber kill you while one Krouman alive."

The negro then gently pushed Francisco back with his hand, as if not wishing to hear his answer, and hastened forward on the berth deck.

Chapter VIII

THE ATTACK

In the meantime the sea-breeze had risen in the offing, and was sweeping along the surface to where the schooner was at anchor. The captain ordered a man to the cross-trees, directing him to keep a good look-out, while he walked the deck in company with his first mate.

"She may not have sailed until a day or two later," said the captain, continuing the conversation; "I have made allowance for that, and depend upon it, as she makes the eastern passage, we must soon fall in with her; if she does not heave in sight this evening by daylight, I shall stretch out in the offing: I know the Portuguese well. The sea-breeze has caught our craft; let them run up the inner jib, and see that she does not foul her anchor."

It was now late in the afternoon, and dinner had been sent into the cabin; the captain descended and took his seat at the table with Francisco, who ate in silence. Once or twice the captain, whose wrath had subsided, and whose kindly feelings towards Francisco, checked for a time, had returned with greater force, tried, but in vain, to rally him into conversation, when "*sail, ho!*" was shouted from the masthead.

"There she is, by G—d!" cried the captain, jumping from, and then, as if checking himself, immediately resuming his seat.

Francisco put his hand to his forehead, covering his eyes as his elbow leant upon the table.

"A large ship, sir; we can see down to the second reef of her topsails," said Hawkhurst, looking down the skylight.

The captain hastily swallowed some wine from a flagon, cast a look of scorn and anger upon Francisco, and rushed on deck.

"Be smart, lads!" cried the captain, after a few seconds' survey of the vessel through his glass; "that's her: furl the awnings, and run the anchor up to the bows: there's more silver in that vessel, my lads, than your chests will hold; and the good saints of the churches at Goa will have to wait a little longer for their gold candlesticks."

The crew were immediately on the alert; the awnings were furled, and all the men, stretching aft the spring cable, walked the anchor up to the bows. In two minutes more the *Avenger* was standing out on the starboard tack, shaping her course so as to cut off the ill-fated vessel. The breeze freshened, and the schooner darted through the smooth water with the impetuosity of a dolphin after its prey. In an hour the hull of the ship was plainly to be distinguished; but the sun was near to the horizon, and before they could ascertain what her force might be, daylight had disappeared. Whether the schooner had been perceived or not it was impossible to say; at all events, the course of the ship had not been altered, and if she had seen the schooner, she evidently treated her with contempt. On board the *Avenger* they were not idle; the long gun in the centre had been cleared from the encumbrances which surrounded it, the other guns had been cast loose, shot handed up, and everything prepared for action, with all the energy and discipline of a man-of-war. The chase had not been lost sight of, and the eyes of the pirate-captain were fixed upon her through a night-glass. In about an hour more the schooner was within a mile of the ship, and now altered her course so as to range up within a cable's length of her to leeward. Cain stood upon the gunwale and hailed. The answer was in Portuguese.

"Heave to, or I'll sink you!" replied he in the same language.

A general discharge from a broadside of carronades, and a heavy volley of muskets from the Portuguese, was the decided answer; the broadside, too much elevated to hit the low hull of the schooner, was still not without effect—the foretop-mast fell, the jaws of the main-gaff were severed, and a large proportion of the standing as well as the running rigging came rattling down on her decks. The volley of musketry was more fatal: thirteen of the pirates were wounded, some of them severely.

"Well done! John Portuguese," cried Hawkhurst; "by the holy poker! I never gave you credit for so much pluck."

"Which they shall pay dearly for," was the cool reply of Cain, as he still remained in his exposed situation.

"Blood for blood! if I drink it," observed the second mate, as he looked at the crimson rivulet trickling down the fingers of his left hand from a wound in his arm—"just tie my handkerchief round this, Bill."

In the interim, Cain had desired his crew to elevate their guns, and the broadside was returned.

"That will do, my lads: starboard; ease off the boom-sheet; let her go right round, Hawkhurst—we cannot afford to lose our men."

The schooner wore round, and ran astern of her opponent.

The Portuguese on board the ship, imagining that the schooner, finding she had met with unexpected resistance, had sheered off, gave a loud cheer.

"The last you will ever give, my fine fellows!" observed Cain, with a sneer.

In a few moments the schooner had run a mile astern of the ship.

"Now, then, Hawkhurst, let her come to and about; man the long gun, and see that every shot is pitched into her, while the rest of them get up a new foretop-mast, and knot and splice the rigging."

The schooner's head was again turned towards the ship; her position was right astern, about a mile distant, or rather more; the long 32-pounder gun amid-ships was now regularly served, every shot passing through the cabin-windows, or some other part of the ship's stern, raking her fore and aft. In vain did the ship alter her course, and present her broadside to the schooner; the latter was immediately checked in her speed, so as to keep the prescribed distance at which the carronades of the ship were useless, and the execution from the long gun decisive. The ship was at the mercy of the pirate; and, as may be expected, no mercy was shown. For three hours did this murderous attack continue, when the gun, which, as before observed, was of brass, became so heated that the pirate-captain desired his men to discontinue. Whether the ship had surrendered or not it was impossible to say, as it was too dark to distinguish: while the long gun was served, the foretop-mast and main-gaff had been shifted, and all the standing and running rigging made good; the schooner keeping her distance, and ſollowing in the wake of the ship until daylight.

We must now repair on board of the ship; she was an Indiaman; one of the very few that occasionally are sent out by the Portuguese government to a country which once owned their undivided sway, but in which, at present, they hold but a few miles of territory. She was bound to Goa, and had on board a small detachment of troops, a new governor and his two sons, a bishop and his niece, with her attendant. The sailing of a vessel with such a freight was a circumstance of rare occurrence; and was, of course, generally bruited about long before her departure. Cain had, for some months, received all the necessary intelligence relative to her cargo and designation; but, as usual with the Portuguese of the present day, delay upon delay had followed, and it was not until about three weeks previous that he had been assured of her immediate departure. He then ran down the coast to the bay we have mentioned, that he might intercept her; and, as the event has proved, showed his usual judgment and decision. The fire of the schooner had been most destructive; many of the Indiaman's crew, as well as of the troops, had been mowed down one after another; until, at last, finding that all their efforts to defend themselves were useless, most of those who were still unhurt had consulted their safety, and hastened down to the lowest recesses of the hold to avoid the raking and destructive shot. At the time that the schooner had discontinued her fire to allow the gun to cool, there was no one on deck but the Portuguese captain and one old weather-beaten seaman who stood at the helm. Below, in the orlop-deck, the remainder of the crew and the passengers were huddled together in a small space: some were attending to the wounded, who were numerous; others were invoking the saints to their assistance; the bishop, a tall dignified person, apparently nearly sixty years of age, was kneeling in the centre of the group, which was dimly lighted by two or three lanterns, at one time in fervent prayer, at another interrupted, that he might give absolution to those wounded men whose spirits were departing, and who were brought down and laid before him by their comrades. On one side of him knelt his orphan niece, a young girl of about seventeen years of age, watching his countenance as he prayed, or bending down with a look of pity and tearful eyes on her expiring countrymen, whose last moments were gladdened by his holy offices. On the other side of the bishop stood the governor, Don Philip de Ribiera, and his two sons, youths in their prime, and holding commissions in the king's service. There was melancholy on the brow of Don Ribiera; he was prepared for, and he anticipated the worst. The eldest son had his eyes fixed upon the sweet countenance of Teresa de Sylva—that very evening, as they walked together on the deck, had they exchanged their vows—that very evening they had luxuriated in the present, and had dwelt with delightful anticipation on the future. But we must leave them and return on deck.

The captain of the Portuguese ship had walked aft, and now went up to Antonio, the old seaman, who was standing at the wheel.

"I still see her with the glass, Antonio, and yet she has not fired for nearly two hours; do you think any accident has happened to her long gun? If so, we may have some chance."

Antonio shook his head. "We have but little chance, I am afraid, my captain; I knew by the ring of the gun, when she first fired it, that it was brass; indeed, no schooner could carry a long iron gun of that calibre. Depend upon it, she only waits for the metal to cool and daylight to return: a long gun or two might have saved us, but now, as she has the advantage of us in heels, we are at her mercy."

"What can she be—a French privateer?"

"I trust it may be so; and I have promised a silver candlestick to St Antonio that it may prove no worse: we then may have some chance of seeing our homes again; but I fear not."

"What, then, do you imagine her to be, Antonio?"

"The pirate which we have heard so much of."

"Jesu protect us! we must then sell our lives as dearly as we can."

"So I intend to do, my captain," replied Antonio, shifting the helm as he spoke.

The day broke, and showed the schooner continuing her pursuit at the same distance astern, without any apparent movement on board. It was not until the sun was some degrees above the horizon that the smoke was again seen to envelope her bows, and the shots crashed through the timbers of the Portuguese ship. The reason for this delay was, that the pirate waited till the sun was up to ascertain if there were any other vessels to be seen, previous to his pouncing on his quarry. The Portuguese captain went aft and hoisted his ensign, but no flag was shown by the schooner. Again whistled the ball, and again did it tear up the decks of the unfortunate ship: many of those who had reascended to ascertain what was going on, now hastily sought their former retreat.

"Mind the helm, Antonio," said the Portuguese captain; "I must go down and consult with the governor."

"Never fear, my captain; as long as these limbs hold together I will do my duty," replied the old man, exhausted as he was by long watching and fatigue.

The captain descended to the orlop-deck, where he found the major part of the crew and passengers assembled.

"My lords," said he, addressing the governor and bishop, "the schooner has not shown any colours, although our own are hoisted. I am come down to know your pleasure. Defence we can make none; and I fear that we are at the mercy of a pirate."

"A pirate!" ejaculated several, beating their breasts and calling upon their saints.

"Silence, my good people, silence," quietly observed the bishop; "as to what it may be best to do," continued he, turning to the captain, "I cannot advise; I am a man of peace, and unfit to hold a place in a council of war. Don Ribiera, I must refer the point to you and your sons. Tremble not, my dear Teresa, are we not under the protection of the Almighty?"

"Holy Virgin! pity us!" exclaimed Teresa.

"Come, my sons," said Don Ribiera, "we will go on deck and consult: let not any of the men follow us; it is useless risking lives which may yet be valuable."

Don Ribiera and his sons followed the captain to the quarter-deck, and with him and Antonio they held a consultation.

"We have but one chance," observed the old man, after a time: "let us haul down our colours as if in submission; they will then range up alongside, and either board us from the schooner, or from their boats; at all events, we shall find out what she is, and, if a pirate, we must sell our lives as dearly as we can. If, when we haul down the colours, she ranges up alongside, as

I expect she will, let all the men be prepared for a desperate struggle."

"You are right, Antonio," replied the governor; "go aft, captain, and haul down the colours;—let us see what she does now. Down, my boys! and prepare the men to do their duty."

As Antonio had predicted, so soon as the colours were hauled down, the schooner ceased firing and made sail. She ranged up on the quarter of the ship, and up her main peak soared the terrific black flag; her broadside was poured into the Indiaman, and before the smoke had cleared away there was a concussion from the meeting sides, and the bearded pirates poured upon her decks.

The crew of the Portuguese, with the detachment of troops, still formed a considerable body of men. The sight of the black flag had struck ice into every heart, but the feeling was resolved into desperation.

"Knives, men! knives!" roared Antonio, rushing on to the attack, followed by the most brave.

"Blood for blood!" cried the second mate, aiming a blow at the old man.

"You have it," replied Antonio, as his knife entered the pirate's heart, while, at the same moment, he fell and was himself a corpse.

The struggle was deadly, but the numbers and ferocity of the pirates prevailed. Cain rushed forward followed by Hawkhurst, bearing down all who opposed them. With one blow from the pirate-captain the head of Don Ribiera was severed to the shoulder; a second struck down the eldest son, while the sword of Hawkhurst passed through the body of the other. The Portuguese captain had already fallen, and the men no longer stood their ground. A general massacre ensued, and the bodies were thrown overboard as fast as the men were slaughtered. In less than five minutes there was not a living Portuguese on the bloody decks of the ill-fated ship.

Chapter IX

THE CAPTURE

"Pass the word for not a man to go below, Hawkhurst!" said the pirate-captain.

"I have, sir; and sentries are stationed at the hatchways. Shall we haul the schooner off?"

"No, let her remain; the breeze is faint already: we shall have a calm in half an hour. Have we lost many men?"

"Only seven, that I can reckon; but we have lost Wallace" (the second mate).

"A little promotion will do no harm," replied Cain: "take a dozen of our best men and search the ship; there are others alive yet. By-the-bye, send a watch on board of the schooner; she is left to the mercy of the Kroumen, and——"

"One who is better out of her," replied Hawkhurst. "And those we find below——" continued the mate.

"Alive!"

"True; we may else be puzzled where to find that portion of her cargo which suits us," said Hawkhurst, going down the hatchway to collect the men, who were plundering on the main-deck and in the captain's cabin.

"Here, you Maltese! up, there! and look well round if there is anything in sight," said the captain, walking aft.

Before Hawkhurst had collected the men and ordered them on board of the schooner, as usual in those latitudes, it had fallen a perfect calm.

Where was Francisco during this scene of blood? He had remained in the cabin of the schooner. Cain had more than once gone down to him, to persuade him to come on deck and assist at the boarding of the Portuguese, but in vain—his sole reply to the threats and solicitations of the pirate was—

"Do with me as you please—I have made up my mind—you know I do not fear death—so long as I remain on board of this vessel I will take no part in your atrocities. If you do respect my mother's memory, suffer her son to seek an honest and honourable livelihood."

These words of Francisco were ringing in the ears of Cain as he walked up and down on the quarter-deck of the Portuguese vessel, and, debased as he was, he could not help feeling that the youth was his equal in animal, and his superior in mental, courage—he was arguing in his own mind upon the course he should pursue with respect to Francisco, when Hawkhurst made his appearance on deck, followed by his men, who dragged up six individuals who had escaped the massacre. These were the bishop; his niece; a Portuguese girl, her attendant; the supercargo of the vessel; a sacristan; and a servant of the ecclesiastic: they were hauled along the deck and placed in a row before the captain, who cast his eyes upon them in severe scrutiny. The bishop and his niece looked round, the one proudly meeting the eye of Cain, although he felt that his hour was come; the other, carefully avoiding his gaze, and glancing round to ascertain whether there were any other prisoners, and, if so, if her betrothed was amongst them; but her eye discovered not what she sought—it was met only by the bearded faces of the pirate-crew, and the blood which bespattered the deck.

She covered her face with her hands.

"Bring that man forward," said Cain, pointing to the servant.

"Who are you?"

"A servant of my lord the bishop."

"And you?" continued the captain.

"A poor sacristan attending upon my lord the bishop."

"And you?" cried he to the third.

"The supercargo of this vessel."

"Put him aside, Hawkhurst!"

"Do you want the others?" inquired Hawkhurst, significantly.

"No."

Hawkhurst gave a signal to some of the pirates, who led away the sacristan and the servant. A stifled shriek and a heavy plunge in the water were heard a few seconds after. During this time, the pirate had been questioning the supercargo as to the contents of the vessel and her stowage, when he was suddenly interrupted by one of the pirates, who, in a hurried voice, stated that the ship had received several shot between wind and water, and was sinking fast. Cain, who was standing on the slide of the carronade with his sword in his hand, raised his arm and struck the pirate a blow on his head with the hilt, which, whether intended or not, fractured his skull, and the man fell upon the deck.

"Take that, babbler! for your intelligence; if these men are obstinate, we may have worked for nothing."

The crew, who felt the truth of their captain's remark, did not appear to object to the punishment inflicted, and the body of the man was dragged away.

"What mercy can we expect from those who show no mercy even to each other?" observed the bishop, lifting up his eyes to heaven.

"Silence!" cried Cain; who now interrogated the supercargo as to the contents of the hold—the poor man answered as well as he could—"the plate! the money for the troops—where are they?"

"The money for the troops is in the spirit-room, but of the plate I know nothing; it is in some of the cases belonging to my lord the bishop."

"Hawkhurst! down at once into the spirit-room and see to the money; in the meantime I will ask a few questions of this reverend father."

"And the supercargo—do you want him any more?"

"No; he may go."

The poor man fell down on his knees in thankfulness at what he considered his escape: he was dragged away by the pirates, and, it is scarcely necessary to add, that in a minute his body was torn to pieces by the sharks, who, scenting their prey from a distance, were now playing in shoals around the two vessels.

The party on the quarter-deck were now (unperceived by the captain) joined by Francisco, who, hearing from the Krouman, Pompey, that there were prisoners still on board, and amongst them two females, had come over to plead the cause of mercy.

"Most reverend father," observed Cain, after a short pause, "you have many articles of value in this vessel?"

"None," replied the bishop, "except this poor girl; she is, indeed, beyond price, and will, I trust, be soon an angel in heaven."

"Yet is this world, if what you preach be true, a purgatory which must be passed through previous to arriving there, and that girl may think death a blessing compared to what she may expect if you refuse to tell me what I would know. You have good store of gold and silver ornaments for your churches—where are they?"

"They are among the packages entrusted to my care."

"How many may you have in all?"

"A hundred, if not more."

"Will you deign to inform me where I may find what I require?"

"The gold and silver are not mine, but are the property of that God to whom they have been dedicated," replied the bishop.

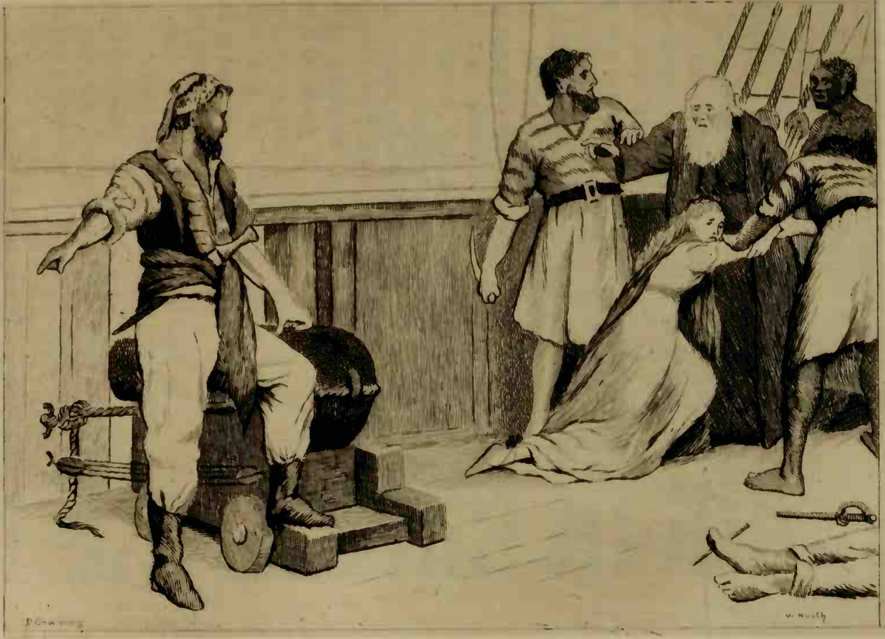
"Answer quickly; no more subterfuge, good sir. Where is it to be found?"

"I will not tell, thou blood-stained man; at least, in this instance, there shall be disappointment, and the sea shall swallow up those earthly treasures, to obtain which thou hast so deeply imbrued thy hands. Pirate! I repeat it, I will not tell."

"Seize that girl, my lads!" cried Cain; "she is yours, do with her as you please."

"Save me! oh save me!" shrieked Teresa, clinging to the bishop's robe.

The pirates advanced and laid hold of Teresa. Francisco


W Nooth

bounded from where he stood behind the captain, and dashed away the foremost.

"Are you men?" cried he, as the pirates retreated. "Holy sir, I honour you. Alas! I cannot save you," continued Francisco, mournfully. "Yet will I try. On my knees—by the love you bore my mother—by the affection you once bore me—do not commit this horrid deed. My lads!" continued Francisco, appealing to the pirates, "join with me and entreat your captain; ye are too brave, too manly, to injure the helpless and the innocent—above all, to shed the blood of a holy man, and of this poor trembling maiden."

There was a pause—even the pirates appeared to side with Francisco, though none of them dared to speak. The muscles of the captain's face quivered with emotion, from what source could not be ascertained.

At this moment the interest of the scene was heightened. The girl who attended upon Teresa, crouched on her knees with terror, had been casting her fearful eyes upon the men which composed the pirate-crew; suddenly she uttered a scream of delight as she discovered among them one that she well knew. He was a young man, about twenty-five years of age, with little or no beard. He had been her lover in his more innocent days; and she, for more than a year, had mourned him as dead, for the vessel in which he sailed had never been heard of. It had been taken by the pirate, and, to save his life, he had joined the crew.

"Filippo! Filippo!" screamed the girl, rushing into his arms. "Mistress! it is Filippo, and we are safe."

Filippo instantly recognised her: the sight of her brought back to his memory his days of happiness and of innocence; and the lovers were clasped in each other's arms.

"Save them! spare them!—by the spirit of my mother! I charge you," repeated Francisco, again appealing to the captain.

"May God bless thee, thou good young man," said the bishop, advancing and placing his hand upon Francisco's head.

Cain answered not; but his broad expanded chest heaved with emotion—when Hawkhurst burst into the group.

"We are too late for the money, captain; the water is already six feet above it. We must now try for the treasure."

This intelligence appeared to check the current of the captain's feelings.

"Now, in one word, sir," said he to the bishop, "where is the treasure? trifle not, or, by heaven——!"

"Name not heaven," replied the bishop: "you have had my answer."

The captain turned away, and gave some directions to Hawkhurst, who hastened below.

"Remove that boy," said Cain to the pirates, pointing to Francisco. "Separate those two fools," continued he, looking towards Filippo and the girl, who were sobbing in each other's arms.

"Never!" cried Filippo.

"Throw the girl to the sharks! Do you hear? am I to be obeyed?" cried Cain, raising his cutlass.

Filippo started up, disengaged himself from the girl, and, drawing his knife, rushed towards the captain to plunge it in his bosom.

With the quickness of lightning the captain caught his uplifted hand, and, breaking his wrist, hurled him to the deck.

"Indeed!" cried he, with a sneer.

"You shall not separate us," said Filippo, attempting to rise.

"I do not intend it, my good lad," replied Cain; "lash them both together and launch them overboard."

This order was now obeyed; for the pirates not only quailed before the captain's cool courage, but were indignant that his life had been attempted. There was little occasion to tie the unhappy pair together; they were locked so fast in each other's arms that it would have been impossible almost to separate them. In this state they were carried to the entering-port and cast into the sea.

"Monster!" cried the bishop, as he heard the splash, "thou wilt have a heavy reckoning for this."

"Now bring these forward," said Cain, with a savage voice.

The bishop and his niece were led to the gangway.

"What dost thou see, good bishop?" said Cain, pointing to the discoloured water, and the rapid motion of the fins of the sharks—eager in the anticipation of a further supply.

"I see ravenous creatures after their kind," replied the bishop, "who will, in all probability, soon tear asunder these poor limbs; but I see no monster like thyself. Teresa, dearest, fear not; there is a God, an avenging God, as well as a rewarding one."

But Teresa's eyes were closed—she could not look upon the scene.

"You have your choice; first torture, and then your body to those sharks for your own portion: and, as for the girl, this moment I hand her over to my crew."

"Never!" shrieked Teresa, springing from the deck and plunging into the wave.

There was the splash of contention, the lashing of tails, until the water was in a foam, and then the dark colour gradually cleared away, and nought was to be seen but the pure blue wave and the still unsatiated monsters of the deep.

"The screws—the screws—quick! we'll have the secret from him," cried the pirate-captain, turning to his crew, who, villains as they were, had been shocked at this last catastrophe—"seize him!"

"Touch him not!" cried Francisco, standing on the hammock-nettings; "touch him not! if you are men."

Boiling with rage, Cain let go the arm of the bishop, drew his pistol, and levelled it at Francisco. The bishop threw up the arm of Cain as he fired, saw that he had missed his aim, and clasped his hands, raising his eyes to heaven in thankfulness at Francisco's escape. In this position he was collared by Hawkhurst, whose anger overcame his discretion, and who hurled him through the entering-port into the sea.

"Officious fool!" muttered Cain, when he perceived what the mate had done. Then, recollecting himself, he cried—"seize that boy and bring him here."

One or two of the crew advanced to obey his orders; but Pompey and the Kroumen, who had been attentive to what was going on, had collected round Francisco, and a scuffle ensued. The pirates, not being very determined, nor very anxious to take Francisco, allowed him to be hurried away in the centre of the Kroumen, who bore him safely to the schooner.

In the meantime Hawkhurst, and the major part of the men on board of the ship, had been tearing up the hold to obtain the valuables, but without success. The water had now reached above the orlop-deck, and all further attempts were unavailing. The ship was settling fast, and it became necessary to quit her, and haul off the schooner, that she might not be endangered by the vortex of the sinking vessel. Cain and Hawkhurst, with their disappointed crew, returned on board the schooner, and, before they had succeeded in detaching the two vessels a cable's length, the ship went down with all the treasure so coveted. The indignation and rage which were expressed by the captain as he rapidly walked the deck in company with his first mate—his violent gesticulations—proved to the crew that there was mischief brewing. Francisco did not return to the cabin; he remained forward with the Kroumen, who, although but a small portion of the ship's company, were known to be resolute and not to be despised. It was also observed that all of them had supplied themselves with arms, and were collected forward, huddled together, watching every motion and manœuvre, and talking rapidly in their own language. The schooner was now steered to the north-westward under all press of sail. The sun again disappeared, but Francisco returned not to the cabin—he went below, surrounded by the Kroumen, who appeared to have devoted themselves to his protection. Once during the night Hawkhurst summoned them on deck, but they obeyed not the order; and, to the expostulation of the boatswain's mate who came down, they made no reply. But there were many of the pirates in the schooner who appeared to coincide with the Kroumen in their regard for Francisco. There are shades of villany in the most profligate of societies; and among the pirate's crew, some were not yet wholly debased. The foul murder of a holy man—the cruel fate of the beautiful Teresa—and the barbarous conduct of the captain towards Filippo and his mistress, were deeds of an atrocity to which even the most hardened were unaccustomed. Francisco's pleadings in behalf of mercy were at least no crime; and yet they considered that Francisco was doomed. He was a general favourite; the worst disposed of the pirates, with the exception of Hawkhurst, if they did not love, could not forbear respecting him; although, at the same time, they felt that if Francisco remained on board, the power even of Cain himself would soon be destroyed. For many months Hawkhurst, who detested the youth, had been most earnest that he should be sent out of the schooner. Now he pressed the captain for his removal in any way, as necessary for their mutual safety, pointing out to Cain the conduct of the Kroumen, and his fears that a large proportion of the ship's company were equally disaffected. Cain felt the truth of Hawkhurst's representation; and he went down to his cabin to consider upon what should be done.

It was past midnight, when Cain, worn out with the conflicting passions of the day, fell into an uneasy slumber. His dreams were of Francisco's mother—she appeared to him pleading for her son, and Cain "babbled in his sleep." At this time Francisco, with Pompey, had softly crawled aft, that they might obtain, if they found the captain asleep, the pistols of Francisco, with some ammunition.

Pompey slipped in first, and started back when he heard the captain's voice. They remained at the cabin-door listening. "No—no," muttered Cain, "he must die—useless—plead not, woman!—I know I murdered thee—plead not, he dies!"

In one of the sockets of the silver lamp there was a lighted wick, the rays of which were sufficient to afford a dim view of the cabin. Francisco, overhearing the words of Cain, stepped in, and walked up to the side of the bed. "Boy! plead not," continued Cain, lying on his back and breathing heavily—"plead not—woman! to-morrow he dies." A pause ensued, as if the sleeping man was listening to a reply. "Yes, as I murdered thee, so will I murder him."

"Wretch," said Francisco, in a low solemn voice, "didst thou kill my mother?"

"I did—I did," responded Cain, still sleeping.

"And why?" continued Francisco, who, at this acknowledgment on the part of the sleeping captain, was careless of discovery.

"In my mood—she vexed me," answered Cain.

"Fiend! thou hast then confessed it," cried Francisco in a loud voice, which awoke the captain, who started up, but, before his senses were well recovered, or his eyes opened so as to distinguish their forms, Pompey struck out the light, and all was darkness; he then put his hand to Francisco's mouth, and led him out of the cabin.

"Who's there?—who's there?"—cried Cain.

The officer in charge of the deck hastened down. "Did you call, sir?"

"Call!" repeated the captain—"I thought there was some one in the cabin. I want a light—that's all," continued he, recovering himself, as he wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead.

In the meantime Francisco, with Pompey, had gained his former place of refuge with the Kroumen. The feelings of the young man changed from agony to revenge; his object in returning to the cabin to recover his weapons had been frustrated, but his determination now was to take the life of the captain if he possibly could. The following morning the Kroumen again refused to work or go on deck; and the state of affairs was reported by Hawkhurst to his chief. The mate now assumed another tone; for he had sounded not the majority but the most steady and influential men on board, who, like himself, were veterans in crime.

"It must be, sir; or you will no longer command this vessel. I am desired to say so."

"Indeed," replied Cain, with a sneer; "perhaps you have already chosen my successor."

Hawkhurst perceived that he had lost ground, and he changed his manner. "I speak but for yourself; if you do not command this vessel, I shall not remain in her—if you quit her, I quit also; and we must find another."

Cain was pacified, and the subject was not renewed.

"Turn the hands up," at last said the captain. The pirate-crew assembled aft.

"My lads, I am sorry that our laws oblige me to make an example; but mutiny and disaffection must be punished. I am equally bound as yourselves by the laws which we have laid down for our guidance while we sail together; and you may believe that in doing my duty in this instance, I am guided by a sense of justice, and wish to prove to you that I am worthy to command. Francisco has been with me since he was a child; he has lived with me, and it is painful to part with him: but I am here to see that our laws are put in force. He has been guilty of repeated mutiny and contempt, and—he must die."

"Death! death!" cried several of the pirates in advance—"death and justice!"

"No more murder!" said several voices from behind.

"Who's that—that speaks?"

"Too much murder yesterday—no more murder!" shouted several voices at once.

"Let the men come forward who speak," cried Cain, with a withering look. No one obeyed this order. "Down, then, my men! and bring up Francisco."

The whole of the pirate-crew hastened below, but with different intentions; some were determined to seize Francisco, and hand him over to death—others to protect him. A confused noise was heard—the shouts of *Down, and seize him!* opposed to those of *No murder! No murder!*

Both parties had snatched up their arms; those who sided with Francisco joined the Kroumen, whilst the others also hastened below to bring him on deck. A slight scuffle ensued before they separated, and ascertained by the separation the strength of the contending parties. Francisco, perceiving that he was joined by a large body, desired his men to follow him, went up the fore ladder, and took possession of the forecastle. The pirates on his side supplied him with arms, and Francisco stood forward in advance. Hawkhurst, and those of the crew who sided with him, had retreated to the quarter-deck, and rallied round the captain, who leaned against the capstern. They were then able to estimate their comparative strength. The number, on the whole, preponderated in favour of Francisco; but on the captain's side were the older and more athletic of the crew, and we may add, the more determined. Still, the captain and Hawkhurst perceived the danger of their situation, and it was thought advisable to parley for the present, and wreak their vengeance hereafter. For a few minutes there was a low consultation between both parties; at last Cain advanced.

"My lads," said he, addressing those who had rallied round Francisco, "I little thought that a firebrand would have been cast in this vessel to set us all at variance. It was my duty, as your captain, to propose that our laws should be enforced. Tell me, now, what it is that you wish. I am only here as your captain, and to take the sense of the whole crew. I have no animosity against that lad; I have loved him—I have cherished him; but, like a viper, he has stung me in return. Instead of being in arms against each other, ought we not to be united? I have, therefore, one proposal to make to you, which is this: Let the sentence go by vote or ballot, if you please, and whatever the sentence may be, I shall be guided by it. Can I say more?"

"My lads," replied Francisco, when the captain had done speaking, "I think it better that you should accept this proposal, rather than that blood should be shed. My life is of little consequence; say, then, will you agree to the vote, and submit to those laws, which, as the captain says, have been laid down to regulate the discipline of the vessel?"

The pirates on Francisco's side looked round among their party, and, perceiving that they were the most numerous, consented to the proposal; but Hawkhurst stepped forward and observed: "Of course, the Kroumen can have no votes, as they do not belong to the vessel."

This objection was important, as they amounted to twenty-five, and, after that number was deducted, in all probability, Francisco's adherents would have been in the minority. The pirates with Francisco objected, and again assumed the attitude of defence.

"One moment," said Francisco, stepping in advance; "before this point is settled, I wish to take the sense of all of you as to another of your laws. I ask you, Hawkhurst, and all you who are now opposed to me, whether you have not one law which is, *Blood for blood?*"

"Yes—yes," shouted all the pirates.

"Then let your captain stand forward, and answer to my charge, if he dares."

Cain curled his lip in derision, and walked within two yards of Francisco.

"Well, boy, I'm here; and what is your charge?"

"First—I ask you, Captain Cain, who are so anxious that the laws should be enforced, whether you acknowledge that 'Blood for blood' is a just law?"

"Most just; and, when shed, the party who revenges is not amenable."

"'Tis well: then, villain that thou art, answer—Didst thou not murder my mother?"

Cain, at this accusation, started.

"Answer the truth, or lie like a recreant," repeated Francisco; "Did you not murder my mother?"

The captain's lips and the muscles of his face quivered, but he did not reply.

"*Blood for blood!*" cried Francisco, as he fired his pistol at Cain, who staggered, and fell on the deck.

Hawkhurst and several of the pirates hastened to the captain, and raised him.

"She must have told him last night," said Cain, speaking with difficulty, as the blood flowed from the wound.

"He told me so himself," said Francisco, turning round to those who stood by him.

Cain was taken down into the cabin. On examination, his wound was not mortal, although the loss of blood had been rapid and very great. In a few minutes Hawkhurst joined the party on the quarter-deck. He found that the tide had turned more in Francisco's favour than he had expected; the law of "Blood for blood" was held most sacred: indeed, it was but the knowledge that it was solemnly recognised, and that, if one pirate wounded another, that other was at liberty to take his life, without punishment, which prevented constant affrays between parties, whose knives would otherwise have been the answer to every affront. It was a more debased law of duelling, which kept such profligate associates on good terms. Finding, therefore, that this feeling predominated, even among those who were opposed to Francisco on the other question, Hawkhurst thought it advisable to parley.

"Hawkhurst," said Francisco, "I have but one request to make, which, if complied with, will put an end to this contention; it is, that you will put me on shore at the first land that we make. If you and your party engage to do this, I will desire those who support me to return to their obedience."

"I grant it," replied Hawkhurst: "and so will the others. Will you not, my men?"

"Agreed—agreed upon all sides," cried the pirates, throwing away their weapons and mingling with each other, as if they never had been opposed.

There is an old saying, that there is honour amongst thieves; and so it often proves. Every man in the vessel knew that this agreement would be strictly adhered to: and Francisco now walked the deck with as much composure as if nothing had occurred.

Hawkhurst, who was aware that he must fulfil his promise, carefully examined the charts when he went down below, came up and altered the course of the schooner two points more to the northward. The next morning he was up at the mast-head nearly half-an-hour, when he descended, and again altered the course. By nine o'clock, a low sandy island appeared on the lee bow; when within half-a-mile of it, he ordered the schooner to be hove-to, and lowered down the small boat from the stern. He then turned the hands up. "My lads, we must keep our promise, to put Francisco on shore at the first land which we made. There it is;" and a malicious smile played on the miscreant's features, as he pointed out to them the barren sand-bank, which promised nothing but starvation and a lingering death. Several of the crew murmured; but Hawkhurst was supported by his own party, and had, moreover, taken the precaution quietly to remove all the arms, with the exception of those with which his adherents were provided.

"An agreement is an agreement; it is what he requested himself, and we promised to perform. Send for Francisco."

"I am here, Hawkhurst; and I tell you candidly, that, desolate as is that barren spot, I prefer it to remaining in your company. I will bring my chest up immediately."

"No—no; that was not a part of the agreement," cried Hawkhurst.

"Every man here has a right to his own property. I appeal to the whole of the crew."

"True—true," replied the pirates; and Hawkhurst found himself again in the minority.

"Be it so."

The chest of Francisco was handed into the boat.

"Is that all?" cried Hawkhurst.

"My lads, am I to have no provisions or water?" inquired Francisco.

"No," replied Hawkhurst.

"Yes—yes," cried most of the pirates.

Hawkhurst did not dare put it to the vote; he turned sulkily away. The Kroumen brought up two breakers of water, and some pieces of pork.

"Here, massa," said Pompey, putting into Francisco's hand a fishing-line with hooks.

"Thank you, Pompey; but I had forgot—that book in the cabin—you know which I mean."

Pompey nodded his head, and went below; but it was some time before he returned, during which Hawkhurst became impatient. It was a very small boat which had been lowered down; it had a lug-sail and two pair of sculls in it, and was quite full when Francisco's chest and the other articles had been put in.

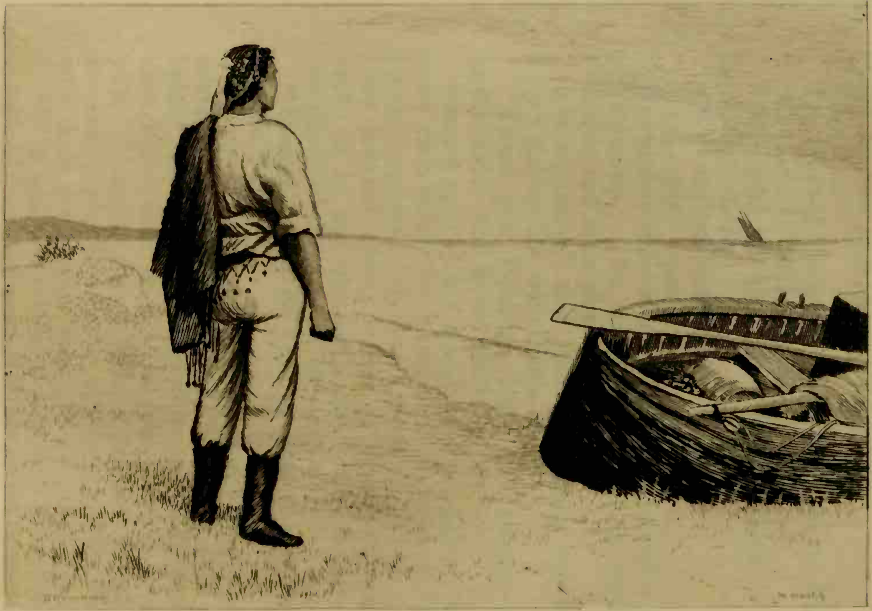
"Come! I have no time to waste," said Hawkhurst; "in the boat!"

Francisco shook hands with many of the crew, and wished all of them farewell. Indeed, now that they beheld the poor lad about to be cast on a desolate island, even those most opposed to him felt some emotions of pity. Although they acknowledged that his absence was necessary, yet they knew his determined courage; and with them that quality was always a strong appeal.

"Who will row this lad ashore, and bring the boat off?"

"Not I," replied one; "it would haunt me ever afterwards."

So they all appeared to think, for no one volunteered. Francisco jumped into the boat.



"There is no room for any one but me; and I will row myself on shore," cried he. "Farewell, my lads! farewell!"

"Stop! not so; he must not have the boat—he may escape from the island," cried Hawkhurst.

"And why shouldn't he, poor fellow?" replied the men; "let him have the boat."

"Yes—yes, let him have the boat;" and Hawkhurst was again overruled.

"Here, Massa Francisco—here de book."

"What's that, sir?" cried Hawkhurst, snatching the book out of Pompey's hand.

"Him, massa, Bible." Francisco waited for the book.

"Shove off!" cried Hawkhurst!"

"Give me my book, Mr Hawkhurst!"

"No!" replied the malignant rascal, tossing the Bible over the taffrail; "he shall not have that. I've heard say that *there is consolation in it to the afflicted.*"

Francisco shoved off his boat, and, seizing his sculls, pushed astern, picked up the book, which still floated, and laid it to dry on the after-thwart of the boat. He then pulled in for the shore. In the meantime the schooner had let draw her foresheet, and already left him a quarter of a mile astern. Before Francisco had gained the sand-bank, she was hull-down to the northward.

Chapter X

THE SAND-BANK

THE first half-hour that Francisco was on this desolate spot he watched the receding schooner: his thoughts were unconnected and vague. Wandering through the various scenes which had passed on the decks of that vessel, and recalling to his memory the different characters of those on board of her, much as he had longed to quit her—disgusted as he had been with those with whom he had been forced to associate; still, as her sails grew fainter and fainter to his view, as she increased her distance, he more than once felt that even remaining on board of her would have been preferable to his present deserted lot. "No, no!" exclaimed he, after a little farther reflection, "I had rather perish here, than continue to witness the scenes which I have been forced to behold."

He once more fixed his eyes upon her white sails, and then sat down on the loose sand, and remained in deep and melancholy reverie until the scorching heat reminded him of his situation; he afterwards rose and turned his thoughts upon his present situation, and to what would be the measures most advisable to take. He hauled his little boat still farther on the beach, and attached the painter to one of the oars, which he fixed deep in the sand; he then proceeded to survey the bank, and found that but a small portion was uncovered at high-water; for, trifling as was the rise of the tide, the bank was so low that the water flowed almost over it. The most elevated part was not more than fifteen feet above high-water mark, and that was a small knoll of about fifty feet in circumference.

To this part he resolved to remove his effects: he returned to the boat, and, having lifted out his chest, the water, and provisions, with the other articles which he had obtained, he dragged them up, one by one, until they were all collected at the spot he had chosen. He then took out of the boat the oars and little sail, which, fortunately, had remained in her. His last object, to haul the little boat up to the same spot, was one which demanded all his exertion; but, after considerable fatigue, he contrived, by first lifting round her bow, and then her stern, to effect his object.

Tired and exhausted, he then repaired to one of the breakers of water and refreshed himself. The heat, as the day advanced, had become intolerable; but it stimulated him to fresh exertion. He turned over the boat, and contrived that the bow and stern should rest upon two little hillocks, so as to raise it above the level of the sand beneath it two or three feet; he spread out the sail from the keel above, with the thole-pins as pegs, so as to keep off the rays of the sun. Dragging the breakers of water and the provisions underneath the boat, he left his chest outside; and, having thus formed for himself a sort of covering which would protect him from the heat of the day and the damp of the night, he crept in, to shelter himself until the evening.

Although Francisco had not been on deck, he knew pretty well whereabouts he then was. Taking out a chart from his chest, he examined the coast to ascertain the probable distance which he might be from any prospect of succour. He calculated that he was on one of a patch of sand-banks off the coast of Loango, and about seven hundred miles from the Isle of St Thomas—the nearest place where he might expect to fall in with an European face. From the coast he felt certain that he could not be more than forty or fifty miles at the most; but could he trust himself among the savage natives who inhabited it? He knew how ill they had been treated by Europeans; for, at that period, it was quite as common for the slave-traders to land and take the inhabitants away as slaves by force, as to purchase them in the more northern territories; still, he might be fortunate enough to fall in with some trader on the coast, as there were a few who still carried on a barter for gold-dust and ivory.

We do not know—we cannot conceive a situation much more deplorable than the one we have just described to have been that of Francisco. Alone—without a chance of assistance—with only a sufficiency of food for a few days, and cut off from the rest of his fellow-creatures, with only so much terra firma as would prevent his being swallowed up by the vast, unfathomable ocean, into which the horizon fell on every side around him, and his chance of escape how small! Hundreds of miles from any from whom he might expect assistance, and the only means of reaching them a small boat—a mere cockle-shell, which the first rough gale would inevitably destroy.

Such, indeed, were the first thoughts of Francisco; but he soon recovered from his despondency. He was young, courageous, and buoyant with hope; and there is a feeling of pride—of trust in our own resources and exertions, which increases and stimulates us in proportion to our danger and difficulty; it is the daring of the soul, proving its celestial origin and eternal duration.

So intense was the heat that Francisco almost panted for sufficient air to support life, as he lay under the shade of the boat during the whole of that day; not a breath of wind disturbed the glassy wave — all nature appeared hushed into one horrible calm. It was not until the shades of night were covering the solitude, that Francisco ventured forth from his retreat; but he found little relief; there was an unnatural closeness in the air — a suffocation unusual even in those climes. Francisco cast his eyes up to the vault of Heaven, and was astonished to find that there were no stars visible—a gray mist covered the whole firmament. He directed his view downwards to the horizon, and that, too, was not to be defined; there was a dark bank all around it. He walked to the edge of the sand-bank; there was not even a ripple—the wide ocean appeared to be in a trance, in a state of lethargy or stupor.

He parted the hair from his feverish brow, and once more surveying the horrible, lifeless, stagnant waste, his soul sickened, and he cast himself upon the sand. There he lay for many hours in a state bordering upon wild despair. At last he recovered himself; and, rising to his knees, he prayed for strength and submission to the will of Heaven.

When he was once more upon his feet, and had again scanned the ocean, he perceived that there was a change rapidly approaching. The dark bank on the horizon had now risen higher up; the opaqueness was everywhere more dense; and low murmurs were heard, as if there was wind stirring aloft, although the sea was still glassy as a lake. Signs of some movement about to take place were evident, and the solitary youth watched and watched. And now the sounds increased—and here and there a wild thread of air—whence coming, who could tell? and as rapidly disappearing, would ruffle, for a second, a portion of the stagnant sea. Then came whizzing sounds and moans, and then the rumbling noise of distant thunder—loud and louder yet—still louder—a broad black line is seen sweeping along the expanse of water—fearful in its rapidity—it comes!—it comes!—and the hurricane burst, at once and with all its force, and all its terrific sounds, upon the isolated Francisco.

The first blast was so powerful and so unexpected that it threw him down; and prudence dictated to him to remain in that position, for the loose sand was swept off and whirled in such force as to blind and prevent his seeing a foot from him; he would have crawled to the boat for security, but he knew not in which direction to proceed. But this did not last; for now the water was borne up upon the strong wings of the hurricane, and the sand was rendered firm by its saturation with the element.

Francisco felt that he was drenched, and he raised his head. All he could discover was, that the firmament was mantled with a darkness, horrible from its intensity, and that the sea was in one extended foam—boiling everywhere, and white as milk—but still smooth, as if the power of the wind had compelled it to be so; but the water had encroached, and one-half the sand-bank was covered with it, while over the other the foam whirled, each portion chasing the other with wild rapidity.

And now the windows of Heaven were opened; and the rain, mingled with the spray caught up by the hurricane, was dashed and hurled upon the forlorn youth, who still lay where he had been first thrown down. But of a sudden, a wash of water told him that he could there remain no longer: the sea was rising—rising fast; and, before he could gain a few paces on his hands and knees, another wave, as if it chased him in its wrath, repeated the warning of his extreme danger, and he was obliged to rise on his feet and hasten to the high part of the sand-bank, where he had drawn up his boat and his provisions

Blinded as he was by the rain and spray, he could distinguish nothing. Of a sudden, he fell violently; he had stumbled over one of the breakers of water, and his head struck against his sea-chest. Where, then, was the boat? it was gone!—it must have been swept away by the fury of the wind. Alas! then all chance was over! and, if not washed away by the angry waters, he had but to prolong his existence but a few days, and then to die. The effect of the blow he had received on his forehead, with the shock of mind occasioned by the disappearance of the boat, overpowered him, and he remained for some time in a state of insensibility.

When Francisco recovered, the scene was again changed; the wide expanse was now in a state of wild and fearful commotion, and the waters roared as loud as did the hurricane. The whole sand-bank, with the exception of that part on which he stood, was now covered with tumultuous foam; and his place of refuge was occasionally invaded, when some vast mass o'erlording the other waves, expended all its fury even to his feet. Francisco prepared to die!

But gradually the darkness of the heavens disappeared, and there was no longer a bank upon the horizon; and Francisco hoped—alas! hoped what?—that he might be saved from the present impending death to be reserved for one still more horrible; to be saved from the fury of the waves, which would swallow him up, and in a few seconds remove him from all pain and suffering, to perish for want of sustenance under a burning sun; to be withered—to be parched to death—calling in his agony for water; and, as Francisco thought of this, he covered his face with his hands, and prayed, "O God! Thy will be done! but, in Thy mercy, raise—still higher raise the waters!"

But the waters did not rise higher. The howling of the wind gradually decreased, and the foaming seas had obeyed the divine injunction—they had gone so far, but not further! And the day dawned, and the sky cleared; and the first red tints announcing the return of light and heat, had appeared on the broken horizon, when the eyes of the despairing youth were directed to a black mass on the tumultuous waters. It was a vessel, with but one mast standing; rolling heavily, and running before the gale right on for the sand-bank where he stood; her hull one moment borne aloft, and the next disappearing from his view in the hollow of the agitated waters. She will be dashed to pieces, thought Francisco; she will be lost—they cannot see the bank! and he would have made a signal to her, if he had been able, to warn her of her danger, forgetting, at the time, his own desolate situation.

As Francisco watched, the sun rose, bright and joyous, over this scene of anxiety and pain. On came the vessel, flying before the gale; while the seas chased her as if they would fain overwhelm her.

It was fearful to see her scud—agonising to know that she was rushing to destruction.

At last he could distinguish those on board. He waved his hand, but they perceived him not; he shouted, but his voice was borne away by the gale. On came the vessel, as if doomed. She was within two cables' length of the bank, when those on board perceived their danger. It was too late!—they rounded her to—another and another wave hurled her towards the sand. She struck!—her only remaining mast fell over the side—and the roaring waves hastened to complete their work of destruction and of death!

Chapter XI

THE ESCAPE

Francisco's eyes were fixed upon the vessel, over which the sea now broke with terrific violence. There appeared to be about eight or nine men on her deck, who sheltered themselves under the weather bulwarks. Each wave, as it broke against her side and then dashed in foam over her, threw her, with a convulsive jerk, still further on the sand-bank. At last she was so high up that their fury was partly spent before they dashed against her frame. Had the vessel been strong and well built; had she been a collier coasting the English shores, there was a fair chance that she might have withstood the fury of the storm until it had subsided, and that by remaining on board, the crew might have survived; but she was of a very different mould, and, as Francisco justly surmised, an American brig, built for swift sailing, very sharp, and, moreover, very slightly put together.

Francisco's eyes, as may easily be supposed, were never removed from the only object which could now interest him—the unexpected appearance and imminent danger of his fellow-creatures at this desolated spot. He perceived that two of the men went to the hatches, and slid them over to leeward: they then descended, and, although the seas broke over the vessel, and a large quantity of water must have poured into her, the hatches were not put on again by those who remained on deck. But in a few minutes this mystery was solved; one after another at first, and then by dozens, poured forth, out of the hold, the kidnapped Africans who composed her cargo. In a short time the decks were covered with them: the poor creatures had been released by the humanity of two of the English sailors, that they might have the same chance with themselves of saving their lives. Still, no attempt was made to quit the vessel. Huddled together, like a flock of sheep, with the wild waves breaking over them, there they all remained, both European and African ; and, as the heavy blows of the seas upon the sides of the vessel careened and shook her, they were seen to cling, in every direction, with no distinction between the captured and their oppressors.

But this scene was soon changed ; the frame of the vessel could no longer withstand the violence of the waves ; and, as Francisco watched, of a sudden it was seen to divide a-midships, and each portion to turn over. Then was the struggle for life ; hundreds were floating on the raging element, and wrestling for existence, and the white foam of the ocean was dotted by the black heads of the negroes who attempted to gain the bank. It was an awful, terrible scene, to witness so many at one moment tossed and dashed about by the waves—so many fellow-beings threatened with eternity. At one moment, they were close to the beach, forced on to it by some tremendous wave ; at the next, the receding water and the undertow swept them all back ; and, of the many who had been swimming, one-half had disappeared to rise no more. Francisco watched with agony as he perceived that the number decreased, and that none had yet gained the shore. At last he snatched up the halyards of his boat's sail which were near him, and hastened down to the spot to afford such succour as might be possible ; nor were his efforts in vain. As the seas washed the apparently inanimate bodies on shore, and would then have again swept them away to return them in mockery, he caught hold of them and dragged them safe on the bank, and thus did he continue his exertions until fifteen of the bodies of the negroes were spread upon the beach. Although exhausted and senseless, they were not dead, and long before he had dragged up the last of the number, many of those previously saved had, without any other assistance than the heat of the sun, recovered from their insensibility.

Francisco would have continued his task of humanity, but the parted vessel had now been riven into fragments by the force of the waves, and the whole beach was strewed with her timbers and her stores, which were dashed on shore by the waters, and then swept back again by the return. In a short time the severe blows he received from these fragments disabled him from further exertion, and he sank exhausted on the sand; indeed, all further attempts were useless. All on board of the vessel had been launched into the sea at the same moment, and those who were not now on shore were past all succour. Francisco walked up to those who had been saved: he found twelve of them were recovered and sitting on their hams; the rest were still in a state of insensibility. He then went up to the knoll, where his chest and provisions had been placed; and, throwing himself down by them, surveyed the scene.

The wind had lulled, the sun shone brightly, and the sea was much less violent. The waves had subsided, and, no longer hurried on by the force of the hurricane, broke majestically and solemnly, but not with the wildness and force which, but a few hours before, they had displayed. The whole of the beach was strewed with the fragments of the vessel, with spars and water-casks; and every moment was to be observed the corpse of a negro turning round and round in the froth of the wave, and then disappearing.

For an hour did he watch and reflect, and then he walked again to where the men who had been rescued were sitting, not more than thirty yards from him; they were sickly emaciated forms, but belonging to a tribe who inhabitated the coast, and who, having been accustomed, from their infancy, to be all the day in the water, had supported themselves better than the other slaves who had been procured from the interior, or the European crew of the vessel, all of whom had perished.

The Africans appeared to recover fast by the heat of the sun, so oppressive to Francisco, and were now exchanging a few words with each other. The whole of them had revived, but those who were most in need of aid were neglected by the others. Francisco made signs to them, but they understood him not. He returned to the knoll, and, pouring out water in a tin pan from the breaker, brought it down to them. He offered it to one, who seized it eagerly; water was a luxury seldom obtained in the hold of a slave-vessel. The man drank deeply, and would have drained the cup, but Francisco prevented him, and held it to the lips of another. He was obliged to refill it three times before they had all been supplied: he then brought them a handful of biscuit, and left them, for he reflected that, without some precautions, the whole sustenance would soon be seized by them and devoured. He buried half a foot deep, and covered over with sand, the breakers of water and the provisions, and by the time he had finished this task, unperceived by the negroes, who still squatted together, the sun had again sunk below the horizon. Francisco had already matured his plans, which were, to form a raft out of the fragments of the vessel, and, with the assistance of the negroes, attempt to gain the main land. He lay down, for the second night, on this eventful spot of desolation, and, commending himself to the Almighty protection, was soon in a deep slumber.

It was not until the powerful rays of the sun blazed on the eyes of the youth that he awoke, so tired had he been with the anxiety and fatigue of the preceding day, and the sleepless harrowing night which had introduced it; he rose and seated himself upon his sea-chest: how different was the scene from that of yesterday! Again the ocean slept, the sky was serene, and not a cloud to be distinguished throughout the whole firmament; the horizontal line was clear, even, and well-defined; a soft breeze just rippled over the dark-blue sea, which now had retired to its former boundary, and left the sand-bank as extended as when first Francisco had been put on shore. But here the beauty of the landscape terminated: the foreground was horrible to look upon; the whole of the beach was covered with the timbers of the wreck, with water-casks, and other articles, in some parts heaped and thrown up one upon another; and, among them, lay jammed and mangled the bodies of the many who had perished. In other parts there were corpses thrown up high and dry, or still rolling and turning to the rippling wave: it was a scene of desolation and of death.

The negroes who had been saved were all huddled up together, apparently in deep sleep, and Francisco quitted his elevated position and walked down to the low beach, to survey the means which the disaster of others afforded him for his own escape. To his great joy he found not only plenty of casks, but many of them full of fresh water; provisions also in sufficiency, and, indeed, everything that could be required to form a raft, as well as the means of support for a considerable time for himself and the negroes who had survived. He then walked up to them and called to them, but they answered not, nor even moved. He pushed them, but in vain; and his heart beat quick, for he was fearful that they were dead from previous exhaustion. He applied his foot to one of them, and it was not until he had used force, which in any other case he would have dispensed with, that the negro awoke from his state of lethargy and looked vacantly about him. Francisco had some little knowledge of the language of the Kroumen, and he addressed the negro in that tongue. To his great joy, he was answered in a language which, if not the same, had so great an affinity to it, that communication became easy. With the assistance of the negro, who used still less ceremony with his comrades, the remainder of them were awakened, and a palaver ensued.

Francisco soon made them understand that they were to make a raft and go back to their own country; explaining to them that, if they remained there, the water and provisions would soon be exhausted, and they would all perish. The poor creatures hardly knew whether to consider him a supernatural being or not; they talked among themselves; they remarked at his having brought them fresh water the day before; they knew that he did not belong to the vessel in which they had been wrecked, and they were puzzled.

Whatever might be their speculations, they had one good effect, which was, that they looked upon the youth as a superior and a friend, and most willingly obeyed him. He led them up to the knoll, and, desiring them to scrape away the sand, supplied them again with fresh water and biscuit. Perhaps the very supply, and the way in which it was given to them, excited their astonishment as much as anything. Francisco ate with them, and, selecting from his sea-chest the few tools in his possession, desired them to follow him. The casks were collected and rolled up; the empty ones arranged for the raft; the spars were hauled up; cleared of the rigging, which was carefully separated for lashings; the one or two sails which had been found rolled up on the spars were spread out to dry; and the provisions and articles of clothing, which might be useful, laid together on one side. The negroes worked willingly, and showed much intelligence: before the evening closed, everything which might be available was secured, and the waves now only tossed about lifeless forms and the small fragments of timber which could not be serviceable.

It would occupy too much time were we to detail all the proceedings of Francisco and the negroes for the space of four days, during which they laboured hard. Necessity is truly the mother of invention, and many were the ingenious resources of the party before they could succeed in forming a raft large enough to carry them and their provisions, with a mast and sail well secured. At length it was accomplished; and, on the fifth day, Francisco and his men embarked, and having pushed clear of the bank with poles, they were at last able to hoist their sail to a fine breeze, and steer for the coast before the wind, at the rate of about three miles an hour. But it was not until they had gained half a mile from the bank that they were no longer annoyed by the dreadful smell arising from the putrefaction of so many bodies, for to bury them all would been have a work of too great time. The last two days of their remaining on the island, the effluvia had become so powerful as to be a source of the greatest horror and disgust even to the negroes.

But before night, when the raft was about eight leagues from the sand-bank it fell calm, and continued so for the next day, when a breeze sprang up from the south-east, to which they trimmed their sail with their head to the northward.

This wind, and the course steered, sent them off from the land, but there was no help for it; and Francisco felt grateful that they had such an ample supply of provisions and water as to enable them to yield to a few days' contrary wind without danger of want. But the breeze continued steady and fresh, and they were now crossing the Bight of Benin; the weather was fine and the sea smooth; the flying fish rose in shoals, and dropped down into the raft, which still forced its way through the water to the northward.

Thus did Francisco and his negro crew remain for a fortnight floating on the wide ocean, without any object meeting their view. Day after day it was the same dreary "sky and water," and, by the reckoning of Francisco, they could not be far from the land, when, on the fifteenth day, they perceived two sail to the northward.

Francisco's heart bounded with joy and gratitude to Heaven; he had no telescope to examine them, but he steered directly for them, and, about dark, he made them out to be a ship and a schooner hove-to.

As Francisco scanned them, surmising what they might be, the sun set behind the two vessels, and, after it had sunk below the horizon, their forms were, for a few minutes, delineated with remarkable precision and clearness. There could be no mistake. Francisco felt convinced that the schooner was the *Avenger!* and his first impulse was to run to the sweep with which they were steered, and put the head of the raft again to the northward. A moment's reflection determined him to act otherwise; he lowered down his sail that he might escape observation, and watched the motions of the vessels during the few minutes of light which remained. That the ship had been captured, and that her capture had been attended with the usual scene of outrage and violence, he had no doubt. He was now about four miles from them, and just as they were vanishing from his straining eyes, he perceived that the schooner had made all sail to the westward. Francisco feeling that he was then secure from being picked up by her, again hoisted his sail with the hope of reaching the ship, which, if not scuttled, he intended to remove on board of, and then make sail for the first port on the coast. But hardly had the raft regained her way when the horizon was lighted up, and he perceived that the pirates had set fire to the vessel. Then it was useless to proceed towards her; and Francisco again thought of putting the head of the raft to the northward, when the idea struck him, knowing the character and cruelty of the pirates, that there might be some unfortunate people left on board to perish in the flames. He therefore continued his course, watching the burning vessel; the flames increased in violence, mounting up to the mast and catching the sails one after the other. The wind blew fresh, and the vessel was kept before the wind—a circumstance that assured Francisco that there were people on board. At first she appeared to leave the raft, but, as her sails, one after another, were consumed by the element, so did she decrease her speed, and Francisco, in about an hour, was close to her and under her counter.

The ship was now one mass of fire from her bows to her main-mast; a volume of flame poured from her main hold rising higher than her lower masts, and ending in a huge mass of smoke carried by the wind a-head of her; the quarter-deck was still free from fire, but the heat on it was so intense, that those on board were all collected at the taffrail; and there they remained, some violent, others in mute despair; for the *Avenger's* people, in their barbarity, had cut away and destroyed all the boats, to prevent their escape. From the light thrown round the vessel, those on board had perceived the approach of Francisco to their rescue, and immediately that it was under the counter, and the sail lowered, almost all of them had descended by ropes, or the stern-ladder, and gained a place in her. In a few minutes, without scarcely an exchange of a word, they were all out of the brig, and Francisco pushed off just as the flames burst from the cabin-windows, darting out in a horizontal line like the tongues of fiery serpents. The raft, now encumbered with twelve more persons, was then steered to the northward; and so soon as those who had been saved had been supplied with some water which they so much needed, Francisco obtained the intelligence which he desired. The ship was from Carthagena, South America; had sailed from thence to Lisbon, with a Don Cumanos, who had a large property up the Magdalen river. He had wished to visit a part of his family at Lisbon, and from thence had sailed to the Canary Isles, where he also had property, in their way from Lisbon to South America. They had been beaten by stress of weather to the southward, and afterwards had been chased by the *Avenger;* being a very fast sailer she had run down several degrees before she had been captured. When the pirate took possession, and found that she had little or no cargo of value to them, for her hold was chiefly filled with furniture and other articles for the use of Don Cumanos, angry at their disappointment, they had first destroyed all their boats, and then set fire to the vessel, taking care not to leave her until all chance of the fire being put out was hopeless. And thus had these miscreants left innocent and unfortunate people to perish.

Francisco heard the narrative of Don Cumanos, and then informed him in what manner he had left the schooner, and his subsequent adventures. Francisco was now very anxious to make the land, or obtain succour from some vessel. The many who were now on board, and the time that he had already been at sea, obliged him to reduce the allowance of water. Fortune favoured him after all his trials; on the third day a vessel hove in sight, and they were seen by her. She made sail for them, and took them all on board. It was a schooner trafficking on the coast for gold-dust and ivory; but the magnificent offers of Don Cumanos induced them to give up their voyage, and run across the Atlantic to Carthagena. To Francisco it was of little moment where he went, and in Don Cumanos he had found a sincere friend.

"You have been my preserver," said the Spaniard; "allow me to return the obligation—come and live with me."

As Francisco was equally pleased with Don Cumanos, he accepted the offer: they all arrived safely at Carthagena, and from thence proceeded to his estate on the Magdalen river.

Chapter XII

THE LIEUTENANT

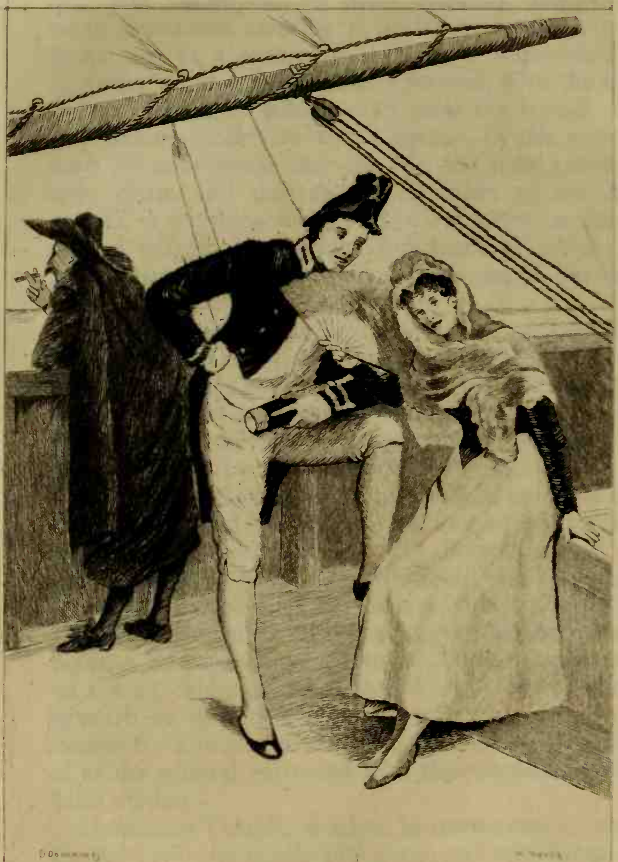
WHEN we last mentioned Edward Templemore, we stated that he was a lieutenant of the admiral's ship on the West India station, commanding the tender. Now the name of the tender was the *Enterprise*; and it was singular that she was one of two schooners built at Baltimore, remarkable for their beauty and good qualities: yet, how different were their employments! Both had originally been built for the slave-trade: now one hoisted the English pennant, and cruised as the *Enterprise*; the other threw out the black flag, and scoured the seas as the *Avenger*.

The *Enterprise* was fitted much in the same way as we have already described her sister-vessel,—that is, with one long brass gun amidships, and smaller ones for her broadside. But in the numbers of their crews there was a great disparity; the *Enterprise* not being manned with more than sixty-five English sailors, belonging to the admiral's ship. She was employed, as most admirals' tenders usually *were*, sometimes carrying a tender made for a supply of provisions, or a tender of services, if required, from the admiral; or, if not particularly wanted, with the important charge of a tender *billet-doux* to some fair friend. But this is a tender subject to touch upon. In the meantime, it must be understood that she had the same commission to sink, burn, and destroy, as all other of his Majesty's vessels, if anything came in her way; but, as she usually carried despatches, the real importance of which were, of course, unknown, she was not to go out of her way upon such service.

Edward Templemore did, however, occasionally go a little out of his way, and had lately captured a very fine privateer, after a smart action, for which he anticipated his promotion; but the admiral thought him too young, and therefore gave the next vacancy to his own nephew, who, the admiral quite forgot, was much younger.

Edward laughed when he heard of it, upon his arrival at Port Royal; and the admiral, who expected that he would make his appearance pouting with disappointment, when he came up to the Penn to report himself, was so pleased with his good-humour that he made a vow that Templemore should have the next vacancy; but this he also quite forgot, because Edward happened to be, at the time it occurred, on a long cruise,—and "out of sight out of mind" is a proverb so well established, that it may be urged as an excuse for a person who had so many other things to think of as the admiral entrusted with the command of the West India station.

Lieutenant Templemore had, in consequence, commanded the *Enterprise* for nearly two years, and without grumbling, for he was of a happy disposition, and passed a very happy sort of life. Mr Witherington was very indulgent to him, and allowed him to draw liberally; he had plenty of money for himself, or for a friend who required it, and he had



plenty of amusement. Amongst other diversions he had fallen most desperately in love: for, in one of his trips to the Leeward Isles (so called from their being to windward) he had succoured a Spanish vessel, which had on board the new governor of Porto Rico, with his family, and had taken upon himself to land them on that island in safety; for which service the English admiral received a handsome letter, concluding with the moderate wish that his excellency might live a thousand years, and Edward Templemore an invitation to go and see them whenever he might pass that way; which, like most general invitations, was as much a compliment as the wish which wound up the letter to the admiral. It did, however, so happen that the Spanish governor had a very beautiful and only daughter, carefully guarded by a duenna, and a monk who was a depository of all the sins of the governor's establishment; and it was with this daughter that Edward Templemore fell into the heresy of love.

She was, indeed, very beautiful; and, like all her countrywomen, was ardent in her affections. The few days that she was on board the schooner with her father, during the time that the *Enterprise* convoyed the Spanish vessel into port, were quite sufficient to ignite two such inflammable beings as Clara d'Alfarez and Edward Templemore. The monk had been left on board of the leaky vessel; there was no accommodation in the schooner for either him or the duenna, and Don Felix de Maxos de Cobas de Manilla d'Alfarez was too busy with his cigar to pay attention to his daughter.

When they were landed, Edward Templemore was asked to their residence, which was not in the town, but at a lovely bay on the south side of the island. The town mansion was appropriated to business and the ceremony of the court: it was too hot for a permanent abode, and the governor only went there for a few hours each day.

Edward Templemore remained a short time at the island, and, at his departure, received the afore-mentioned letter from the father to the English admiral, and an assurance of unalterable fidelity from the daughter to the English lieutenant. On his return, he presented the letter, and the admiral was satisfied with his conduct.

When ordered out to cruise, which he always was when there was nothing else to do, he submitted to the admiral whether, if he should happen to be near Porto Rico, he could not leave an answer to the Spanish governor's letter; and the admiral, who knew the value of keeping up a good understanding with foreign relations, took the hint, and gave him one to deliver, if *convenient*. The second meeting was, as may be supposed, more cordial than the first on the part of the young lady; not so, however, on the part of the duenna and holy friar, who soon found out that their charge was in danger from heretical opinions.

Caution became necessary; and, as secresy adds a charm to an amour, Clara received a long letter and a telescope from Edward. The letter informed her that whenever he could, he would make his appearance in his schooner off the south of the island, and await a signal made by her at a certain window, acknowledging her recognition of his vessel. On the night of that signal, he would land in his boat and meet her at an appointed spot. This was all very delightful; and it so happened that Edward had four or five times contrived, during the last year, to meet Clara without discovery and again and again to exchange his vows. It was agreed between them that, when he quitted the station, she should quit her father and her home, and trust her future happiness to an Englishman and a heretic.

It may be a matter of surprise to some of our readers that the admiral should not have discovered the frequent visits of the *Enterprise* to Porto Rico, as Edward was obliged to bring his log for examination every time that he returned; but the admiral was satisfied with Edward's conduct, and his anxiety to cruise when there was nothing else to do. His logs were brought on shore to the admiral's secretary, carefully rolled and sealed up. The admiral's secretary threw the packages on one side, and thought no more of the matter, and Edward had always a ready story to tell when he took his seat at the admiral's dinner-table; besides, he is a very unfit person to command a vessel who does not know how to write a log that will bear an investigation. A certain latitude is always allowed in every degree of latitude as well as longitude.

The *Enterprise* had been despatched to Antigua, and Edward thought this an excellent opportunity to pay a visit to Clara d'Alfarez; he therefore, upon his return, hove-to off the usual headland, and soon perceived the white curtain thrown out of the window.

"There it is, sir," said one of the midshipmen who was near him—for he had been there so often that the whole crew of the *Enterprise* were aware of his attachment—"she has shown her flag of truce."

"A truce to your nonsense, Mr Warren," replied Edward, laughing; "how came you to know anything about it?"

"I only judge by cause and effect, sir; and I know that I shall have to go on shore and wait for you to-night."

"That's not unlikely: but let draw the fore-sheet; we must now get behind the headland."

The youngster was right; that evening, a little before dark, he attended his commander on shore, the *Enterprise* lying to with a lantern on her peak.

"Once more, dearest Clara!" said Edward, as he threw off her long veil and pressed her in his arms.

"Yes, Edward, once more—but I am afraid only once more, for my maid, Inez, has been dangerously ill, and has confessed to Friar Ricardo. I fear much that, in her fright (for she thought that she was dying), she has told all. She is better now."

"Why should you imagine so, Clara?"

"Oh, you know not what a frightened fool that Inez is when she is ill. Our religion is not like yours."

"No, dear, it is not; but I will teach you a better."

"Hush, Edward, you must not say that. Holy Virgin! if Friar Ricardo should hear you! I think that Inez must have told him, for he fixes his dark eyes upon me so earnestly. Yesterday he observed to me that I had not confessed."

"Tell him to mind his own business."

"That is his business, and I was obliged to confess to him last night. I told him a great many things, and then he asked me if that was all. His eyes went through me. I trembled as I uttered an untruth—for I said it was."

"I confess my sins but to my Maker, Clara; and I confess my love but to you. Follow my plan, dearest!"

"I will half obey you, Edward. I will not tell my love."

"And sins you have none, Clara; so you will obey me in all."

"Hush, Edward, you must not say that. We all have sins; and, oh! what a grievous sin they say it is to love you, who are a heretic! Holy Virgin, pardon me! but I could not help it."

"If that is your only sin, dearest, I can safely give you absolution."

"Nay, Edward, don't joke, but hear me. If Inez has confessed, they will look for me here; and we must not meet again—at least not in this place. You know the little bay behind the rock—it is not much farther off, and there is a cave where I can wait; another time it must be there."

"It shall be there, dearest; but is it not too near the beach? will you not be afraid of the men in the boat, who must see you?"

"But we can leave the beach. It is Ricardo, alone, that I am in dread of—and the Donna Maria. Merciful heaven! should my father know it all, we should be lost! be separated for ever!" and Clara laid her forehead on Edward's shoulder, as her tears fell fast.

"There is nought to fear, Clara. Hush! I heard a rustling in those orange-trees. Listen!"

"Yes! yes!" whispered Clara, hastily; "there is some one! Away! dear Edward, away!"

Clara sprang from his side, and hastened up the grove. Edward made his retreat; and, flying down the rocky and narrow path through the underwood, was soon on the beach and into his boat. The *Enterprise* arrived at head-quarters, and Edward reported himself to the admiral.

"I have work for you, Mr Templemore," said the admiral: "you must be ready to proceed on service immediately. We've found your match."

"I hope I may find her, sir," replied the lieutenant.

"I hope so, too; for, if you give a good account of her, it will put another swab on your shoulder. The pirate schooner which has so long infested the Atlantic has been seen and chased, off Barbadoes, by the *Amelia;* but it appears that there is not a vessel in the squadron which can come near her, unless it be the *Enterprise*. She has since captured two West Indiamen, and was seen steering with them towards the coast of Guiana. Now, I am going to give you thirty additional hands, and send you after her."

"Thank you, sir," replied Edward, his countenance beaming with delight.

"How soon will you be ready?" inquired the admiral.

"To-morrow morning, sir."

"Very good. Tell Mr Hadley to bring me the order for the men, and your sailing-orders, and I will sign them; but recollect, Mr Templemore, you will have an awkward customer. Be prudent—brave I know you to be."

Edward Templemore promised everything, as most people do in such cases; and, before the next evening, the *Enterprise* was well in the offing, under a heavy press of sail.

Chapter XIII

THE LANDING

The property of Don Cumanos, to which he had retired with his family, accompanied by Francisco, extended from the mouth of, to many miles up, the Magdalen river. It was a fine alluvial soil, forming one vast strip of rich meadow, covered with numerous herds of cattle. The house was not a hundred yards from the banks of this magnificent stream, and a small but deep creek ran up to the adjacent buildings,—for Don Cumanos had property even more valuable, being proprietor of a gold-mine near the town of Jambrano, about eighty miles farther up, and which mine had latterly become exceedingly productive. The ore was brought down the river in boats, and smelted in the out-houses near the creek to which we have just referred.

It will be necessary to observe that the establishment of the noble Spaniard was numerous, consisting of nearly one hundred persons, employed in the smelting-houses, or attached to the household.

For some time Francisco remained here happy and contented; he had become the confidential supervisor of Don Cumanos' household, proved himself worthy of a trust so important, and was considered as one of the family.

One morning, as Francisco was proceeding down to the smelting-house to open the hatches of the small decked boats, which had arrived from Jambrano with ore, and which were invariably secured with a padlock by the superintendent above, to which Don Cumanos had a corresponding key, one of the chief men informed him that a vessel had anchored off the mouth of the river the day before, and weighed again early that morning, and that she was now standing off and on.

"From Carthagena, probably, beating up," replied Francisco.

"*Valga me dios*, if I know that, sir," said Diego. "I should have thought nothing about it; but Giacomo and Pedro, who went out to fish last night, as usual, instead of coming back before midnight, have not been heard of since."

"Indeed! that is strange. Did they ever stay so long before?"

"Never, sir; and they have fished together now for seven years."

Francisco gave the key to the man, who opened the locks of the hatches, and returned it.

"There she is!" cried the man; the head sails making their appearance as the vessel opened to their view from the projecting point,—distant about four miles. Francisco directed his eye towards her, and, without further remark, hastened to the house.

"Well, Francisco!" said Don Cumanos, who was stirring a small cup of chocolate, "what's the news this morning?"

"The *Nostra Senora del Carmen* and the *Aguilla* have arrived, and I have just unlocked the hatches. There is a vessel off the point which requires examination, and I have come for the telescope."

"Requires examination! Why, Francisco?"

"Because Giacomo and Pedro, who went fishing last night, have not returned; and there are no tidings of them."

"That is strange! But how is this connected with the vessel?"

"That I will explain as soon as I have had an examination of her," replied Francisco, who had taken up the telescope, and was drawing out the tube. Francisco fixed the glass against the sill of the window, and examined the vessel some time in silence.

"Yes! by the living God! it is the *Avenger*, and no other," exclaimed he, as he removed the telescope from his eye.

"Eh!" cried Don Cumanos.

"It is the pirate vessel!—the *Avenger!*—I'll forfeit my life upon it! Don Cumanos, you must be prepared. I know that they have long talked of a visit to this quarter, and anticipate great booty; and they have those on board who know the coast well. The disappearance of your two men convinces me that they sent up their boats last night to reconnoitre, and have captured them. Torture will extract the information which the pirates require; and I have little doubt but that an attack will be made, when they learn how much bullion there is, at present, on your premises."

"You may be right," replied Don Cumanos, thoughtfully; "that is, provided you are sure that it is the pirate vessel."

"Sure, Don Cumanos! I know every timber and plank in her; there is not a rope or a block but I can recognise. At the distance of four miles, with such a glass as this, I can discover every little variety in her rigging, from other craft. I will swear to her," repeated Francisco, once more looking through the telescope.

"And if they attack, Francisco?"

"We must defend ourselves; and, I trust, beat them off. They will come in their boats, and at night. If they were to run in the schooner by daylight, and anchor abreast of us, we should have but a poor chance. But they little think that I am here, and that they are recognised. They will attack this night, I rather think."

"And what do you then propose, Francisco?"

"That we should send all the females away to Don Teodoro's—it is but five miles—and call the men together as soon as possible. We are strong enough to beat them off, if we barricade the house. They cannot land more than from ninety to one hundred men, as some must remain in charge of the schooner; and we can muster quite as many. It may be as well to promise our men a reward if they do their duty."

"That is all right enough; and the bullion we have here——"

"Here we had better let it remain; it will take too much time to remove it, and, besides, will weaken our force by the men who must be in charge of it. The out-houses must be abandoned, and everything which is of consequence taken from them. Fire them they will, in all probability. At all events, we have plenty of time before us, if we begin at once."

"Well, Francisco, I shall make you commandant, and leave the arrangements to you, while I go and speak to Donna Isidora. Send for the men and speak to them; promise them rewards; and act as if you were ordering upon your own responsibility."

"I trust I shall prove myself worthy of your confidence, sir," replied Francisco.

"Carambo!" exclaimed the old don, as he left the room, "but it is fortunate you are here. We might all have been murdered in our beds."

Francisco sent for the head men of the establishment, and told them what he was convinced they would have to expect; and he then explained to them his views. The rest were all summoned; and Francisco pointed out to them the little mercy they would receive if the pirates were not repulsed, and the rewards which were promised by Don Cumanos if they did their duty.

Spaniards are individually brave, and, encouraged by Francisco, they agreed that they would defend the property to the last.

The house of Don Cumanos was well suited to resist an attack of this description, in which musketry only was expected to be employed. It was a long parallelogram of stone walls, with a wooden veranda on the first floor,—for it was only one storey high. The windows on the first storey were more numerous, but at the basement there were but two, and no other opening but the door in the whole line of building. It was of a composite architecture, between the Morisco and the Spanish. If the lower part of the house, which was of stone, could be secured from entrance, the assailants would, of course, fight under a great disadvantage. The windows below were the first secured, by piling a heavy mass of stones in the interior of the rooms against them, rising to the ceiling from a base like the segment of a pyramid extending to the opposite side of the chamber; and every preparation was made for effectually barricading the door before night. Ladders were then fixed to ascend to the veranda, which was rendered musket-proof nearly as high as its railings, to protect the men. The Donna Isidora, and the women of the establishment, were, in the afternoon, despatched to Don Teodoro's; and, at the request of Francisco, joined to the entreaties of Donna Isidora, Don Cumanos was persuaded to accompany them.

The don called his men, and, telling them that he left Francisco in command, expected them to do their duty; and then shaking hands with him, the cavalcade was soon lost in the woods behind the narrow meadows which skirted the river.

There was no want of muskets and ammunition. Some were employed casting bullets, and others in examining the arms which had long been laid by. Before evening, all was ready; every man had received his arms and ammunition; the flints had been inspected: and Francisco had time to pay more attention to the schooner, which had, during the day, increased her distance from the land, but was now again standing in for the shore. Half-an-hour before dusk, when within three miles, she wore round, and put her head to the offing.

"They'll attack this night," said Francisco; "I feel almost positive: their yards and stay-tackles are up; all ready for hoisting out the long-boat."

"Let them come, senor; we will give them a warm reception," replied Diego, the second in authority.

It was soon too dark to perceive the vessel. Francisco and Diego ordered every man, but five, into the house; the door was firmly barricaded, and some large pieces of rock, which had been rolled into the passage, piled against it. Francisco then posted the five men down the banks of the river, at a hundred yards distant from each other, to give notice of the approach of the boats. It was about ten o'clock at night when Francisco and Diego descended the ladder, and went to examine their outposts.

"Senor," said Diego, as he and Francisco stood on the bank of the river, "at what hour is it your idea that these villains will make their attempt?"

"That is difficult to say. If the same captain commands them who did when I was on board of her, it will not be until after the moon is down, which will not be till midnight; but should it be any other who is in authority, they may not be so prudent."

"Holy Virgin! senor, were you ever on board of that vessel?"

"Yes, Diego, I was, and for a long while, too; but not with my own good-will. Had I not been on board, I never should have recognised her."

"Very true, senor; then we may thank the saints that you have once been a pirate."

"I hope that I never was that, Diego," replied Francisco, smiling; "but I have been a witness to dreadful proceedings on board of that vessel, at the remembrance of which, even now, my blood curdles."

To pass away the time, Francisco then detailed many scenes of horror to Diego, which he had witnessed when on board of the *Avenger;* and he was still in the middle of a narrative when a musket was discharged by the farthermost sentinel.

"Hark, Diego!"

Another, and another, nearer and nearer to them, gave the signal that the boats were close at hand. In a few minutes the men all came in, announcing that the pirates were pulling up the stream in three boats, and were less than a quarter of a mile from the landing-place.

"Diego, go to the house with these men, and see that all is ready," said Francisco; "I will wait here a little longer: but do not fire till I come to you."

Diego and the men departed, and Francisco was left on the beach alone.

In another minute the sound of the oars was plainly distinguishable, and Francisco's ears were directed to catch, if possible, the voices. "Yes," thought he, "you come with the intentions of murder and robbery; but you will, through me, be disappointed." As the boats approached, he heard the voice of Hawkhurst.

The signal muskets fired had told the pirates that they were discovered, and that in all probability they would meet with resistance; silence was, therefore, no longer of any advantage.

"Oars! my lads—oars!" cried Hawkhurst.

One boat ceased rowing, and soon afterwards the two others. The whole of them were now plainly seen by Francisco, at the distance of about one cable's length from where he stood; and the clear still night carried the sound of their voices along the water.

"Here is a creek, sir," said Hawkhurst, "leading up to those buildings. Would it not be better to land there, as, if they are not occupied, they will prove a protection to us, if we have a hard fight for it?"

"Very true, Hawkhurst," replied a voice, which Francisco immediately recognised to be that of Cain.

"He is alive, then," thought Francisco, "and his blood is not yet upon my hands."

"Give way, my lads!" cried Hawkhurst.

The boats dashed up the creek, and Francisco hastened back to the house.

"Now, my lads," said he, as he sprang up the ladder, "you must be resolute; we have to deal with desperate men. I have heard the voices of the captain and chief mate; so there is no doubt as to its being the pirate. The boats are up the creek, and will land behind the out-buildings. Haul up these ladders, and lay them fore and aft on the veranda; and do not fire without taking a good aim. Silence! my men—silence! Here they come."

The pirates were now seen advancing from the out-buildings in strong force. In the direction in which they came, it was only from the side of the veranda, at which not more than eight or ten men could be placed, that the enemy could be repulsed. Francisco, therefore, gave orders that as soon as some of the men had fired, they should retreat and load their muskets, to make room for others.

When the pirates had advanced half-way to the house, on the clear space between it and the out-buildings, Francisco gave the word to fire. The volley was answered by another, and a shout from the pirates, who, with Hawkhurst and Cain at their head, now pressed on, but not until they had received a second discharge from the Spaniards, and the pirates had fired in return. As the Spaniards could not at first fire a volley of more than a dozen muskets at a time, their opponents imagined their force to be much less than it really was. They now made other arrangements. They spread themselves in a semicircle in front of the veranda, and kept up a continual galling fire. This was returned by the party under Francisco for nearly a quarter of an hour; and, as all the muskets were now called into action, the pirates found out that they had a more formidable enemy to cope with than they had anticipated.

It was now quite dark, and not a figure was to be distinguished, except by the momentary flashing of the firearms. Cain and Hawkhurst, leaving their men to continue the attack, had gained the house, and a position under the veranda. Examining the windows and door, there appeared but little chance of forcing an entrance; but it immediately occurred to them, that under the veranda their men would not be exposed, and that they might fire through the wooden floor of it upon those above. Hawkhurst hastened away, and returned with about half the men, leaving the others to continue their attack as before. The advantage of his manœuvre was soon evident. The musket-balls of the pirates pierced the planks, and wounded many of the Spaniards severely; and Francisco was at last obliged to order his men to retreat into the house, and fire out of the windows.

But even this warfare did not continue; for the supporting-pillars of the veranda being of wood and very dry, they were set fire to by the pirates. Gradually the flames wound round them, and their forked tongues licked the balustrade. At last, the whole of the veranda was in flames. This was a great advantage to the attacking party, who could now distinguish the Spaniards without their being so clearly seen themselves. Many were killed and wounded. The smoke and heat became so intense in the upper storey, that the men could no longer remain there; and, by the advice of Francisco, they retreated to the basement of the house.

"What shall we do now, senor?" said Diego, with a grave face.

"Do!" replied Francisco; "they have burnt the veranda, that is all. The house will not take fire; it is of solid stone; the roof indeed may; but still here we are. I do not see that they are more advanced than they were before. As soon as the veranda has burnt down, we must return above, and commence firing again from the windows."

"Hark, sir! they are trying the door."

"They may try a long while; they should have tried the door while the veranda protected them from our sight. As soon as it is burnt we shall be able to drive them away from it. I will go up again and see how things are."

"No, senor; it is of no use. Why expose yourself now that the flames are so bright?"

"I must go and see if that is the case, Diego. Put all the wounded men in the north chamber; it will be the safest, and more out of the way."

Francisco ascended the stone staircase, and gained the upper storey. The rooms were filled with smoke, and he could distinguish nothing. An occasional bullet whistled past him. He walked towards the windows, and sheltered himself behind the wall between them.

The flames were not so violent, and the heat more bearable. In a short time, a crash, and then another, told him that the veranda had fallen in. He looked through the window. The mass of lighted embers had fallen down in front of the house, and had, for a time, driven away the assailants. Nothing was left of the veranda but the burning ends of the joists fixed in the wall above the windows, and the still glowing remains of the posts which once supported it.

But the smoke from below now cleared away, and the discharge of one or two muskets told Francisco that he was perceived by the enemy.

"The roof is safe," thought he, as he withdrew from the window: "and now I do not know whether the loss of the veranda may not prove a gain to us."

What were the intentions of the pirates it was difficult to ascertain. For a time they left off firing, and Francisco returned to his comrades. The smoke had gradually cleared away, and they were able to resume their position above; but, as the pirates did not fire, they, of course, could do nothing, as it was only by the flashing of the muskets that the enemy was to be distinguished. No further attempts were made at the door or windows below; and Francisco in vain puzzled himself as to the intended plans of the assailants.

Nearly half an hour of suspense passed away. Some of the Spaniards were of the opinion that they had retreated to their boats and gone away, but Francisco knew them better. All he could do was to remain above, and occasionally look out to discover their motions. Diego, and one or two more, remained with him; the other men were kept below that they might be out of danger.

"Holy Francis! but this has been a dreadful night, senor; how many hours until daylight?" said Diego.

"Two hours at least, I should think," replied Francisco; "but the affair will be decided before that."

"The saints protect us! See, senor, are they not coming?"

Francisco looked through the gloom, in the direction of the out-buildings, and perceived a group of men advancing. A few moments, and he could clearly make them out.

"Yes, truly, Diego; and they have made ladders, which they are carrying. They intend to storm the windows. Call them all up; and now we must fight hard indeed."

The Spaniards hastened up and filled the room above, which had three windows in the front, looking towards the river, and which had been sheltered by the veranda.

"Shall we fire now, senor?"

"No—no; do not fire till your muzzles are at their hearts. They cannot mount more than two at a time at each window. Recollect, my lads, that you must now fight hard, for your lives will not be spared; they will show no quarter and no mercy."

The ends of the rude ladders now made their appearance above the sill of each window. They had been hastily, yet firmly, constructed, and were nearly as wide as the windows. A loud cheer was followed by a simultaneous mounting of the ladders.

Francisco was at the centre window, when Hawkhurst made his appearance, sabre in hand. He struck aside a musket aimed at him, and the ball whizzed harmless over the broad water of the river. Another step, and he would have been in, when Francisco fired his pistol; the ball entered the left shoulder of Hawkhurst, and he dropped his hold. Before he could regain it, a Spaniard charged at him with his musket, and threw him back. He fell, bearing down with him one or two of his comrades, who had been following him up the ladder.

Francisco felt as if the attack at that window was of little consequence after the fall of Hawkhurst, whose voice he had recognised; and he hastened to the one on the left, as he had heard Cain encouraging his men in that direction. He was not wrong in his conjecture; Cain was at the window, attempting to force an entrance, but was opposed by Diego and other resolute men. But the belt of the pirate captain was full of pistols, and he had already fired three with effect. Diego and the two best men were wounded, and the others who opposed him were alarmed at his giant proportions. Francisco rushed to attack him; but what was the force of so young a man against the Herculean power of Cain? Still Francisco's left hand was at the throat of the pirate, and the pistol was pointed in his right, when the flash of another pistol, fired by one who followed Cain, threw its momentary vivid light upon the features of Francisco, as he cried out, "Blood for blood!" It was enough: the pirate captain uttered a yell of terror at the supposed supernatural appearance; and he fell from the ladder in a fit amongst the still burning embers of the veranda.

The fall of their two chiefs, and the determined resistance of the Spaniards, checked the impetuosity of the assailants. They hesitated; and they at last retreated, bearing away with them their wounded. The Spaniards cheered, and, led by Francisco, followed them down the ladders, and, in their turn, became the assailants. Still the pirates' retreat was orderly: they fired, and retired rank behind rank successively. They kept the Spaniards at bay, until they had arrived at the boats; when a charge was made, and a severe conflict ensued. But the pirates had lost too many men, and, without their commander, felt dispirited. Hawkhurst was still on his legs, and giving orders as coolly as ever. He espied Francisco, and, rushing at him, while the two parties were opposed muzzle to muzzle, seized him by his collar, and dragged him in amongst the pirates. "Secure him, at all events," cried Hawkhurst, as they slowly retreated and gained the outhouses. Francisco was overpowered and hauled into one of the boats, all of which in a few minutes afterwards were pulling with all their might to escape from the muskets of the Spaniards, who followed the pirates by the banks of the river, annoying them in their retreat.

Chapter XIV

THE MEETING

THE pirates returned to their vessel discomfited. Those on board, who were prepared to hoist in ingots of precious metal, had to receive nought but wounded men, and many of their comrades had remained dead on the shore. Their captain was melancholy and downcast. Hawkhurst was badly wounded, and obliged to be carried below as soon as he came on board. The only capture which they had made was their former associate Francisco, who, by the last words spoken by Hawkhurst as he was supported to his cabin, was ordered to be put into irons. The boats were hoisted in without noise and a general gloom prevailed. All sail was then made upon the schooner, and, when the day dawned, she was seen by the Spaniards far away to the northward.

The report was soon spread through the schooner that Francisco had been the cause of their defeat; and, although this was only a surmise, still, as they considered that, had he not recognised the vessel the Spaniards would not have been prepared, they had good grounds for what had swelled into an assertion. He became, therefore, to many of them an object of bitter enmity, and they looked forward with pleasure to his destruction, which his present confinement they considered but the precursor of.

"Hist! Massa Francisco!" said a low voice near to where Francisco sat on the chest. Francisco turned round, and beheld the Krouman, his old friend.

"Ah! Pompey, are you all still on board?" said Francisco.

"All! no," replied the man, shaking his head; "some die—some get away—only four Kroumen left. Massa Francisco, how you come back again? Everybody tink you dead. I say no, not dead—ab charm with him—ab book."

"If that was my charm, I have it still," replied Francisco, taking the Bible out of his vest; for, strange to say, Francisco himself had a kind of superstition relative to that Bible, and had put it into his bosom previous to the attack made by the pirates.

"Dat very good, Massa Francisco; den you quite safe. Here come Johnson—he very bad man. I go away."

In the meantime Cain had retired to his cabin with feelings scarcely to be analysed. He was in a bewilderment. Notwithstanding the wound he had received by the hand of Francisco, he would never have sanctioned Hawkhurst putting him on shore on a spot which promised nothing but a lingering and miserable death. Irritated as he had been by the young man's open defiance, he loved him—loved him much more than he was aware of himself; and when he had recovered sufficiently from his wound, and had been informed where Francisco had been sent on shore, he quarrelled with Hawkhurst, and reproached him bitterly and sternly, in language which Hawkhurst never forgot or forgave. The vision of the starving lad haunted Cain, and rendered him miserable. His affection for him, now that he was, as he supposed, lost for ever, increased with tenfold force; and since that period Cain had never been seen to smile. He became more gloomy, more ferocious than before, and the men trembled when he appeared on deck.

The apparition of Francisco after so long an interval, and in such an unexpected quarter of the globe, acted, as we have before described, upon Cain. When he was taken to the boat he was still confused in his ideas; and it was not until they were nearly on board, that he perceived that this young man was indeed at his side. He could have fallen on his neck and kissed him; for Francisco had become to him a capture more prized than all the wealth of the Indies. But one pure good feeling was still unextinguished in the bosom of Cain; stained with every crime—with his hands so deeply imbrued in blood—at enmity with all the rest of the world;—that one feeling burned bright and clear, and was not to be quenched. It might have proved a beacon-light to steer him back to repentance and good works.

But there were other feelings which also crowded upon the mind of the pirate-captain. He knew Francisco's firmness and decision. By some inscrutable means, which Cain considered as supernatural, Francisco had obtained the knowledge, and had accused him, of his mother's death. Would not the affection which he felt for the young man be met with hatred and defiance? He was but too sure that it would; and then his gloomy cruel disposition would reassume its influence, and he thought of revenging the attack upon his life. His astonishment at the reappearance of Francisco was equally great, and he trembled at the sight of him as if he was his accusing and condemning spirit. Thus did he wander from one fearful fancy to another, until he at last summoned up resolution to send for him.

A morose dark man, whom Francisco had not seen when he was before in the schooner, obeyed the commands of the captain. The irons were unlocked, and Francisco was brought down into the cabin. The captain rose and shut the door.

"I little thought to see you here, Francisco," said Cain.

"Probably not," replied Francisco, boldly; "but you have me again in your power, and may now wreak your vengeance."

"I feel none, Francisco; nor would I have suffered you to have been put on shore as you were, had I known of it. Even now that our expedition has failed through your means, I feel no anger towards you, although I shall have some difficulty in preserving you from the enmity of others. Indeed, Francisco, I am glad to find that you are alive, and I have bitterly mourned your loss:" and Cain extended his hand.

But Francisco folded his arms, and was silent.

"Are you then so unforgiving?" said the captain; "you know that I tell the truth."

"I believe that you state the truth, Captain Cain, for you are too bold to lie; and, as far as I am concerned, you have all the forgiveness you may wish: but I cannot take that hand—nor are our accounts still settled."

"What would you more? Cannot we be friends again? I do not ask you to remain on board. You are free to go where you please. Come, Francisco, take my hand, and let us forget what is passed."

"The hand that is imbrued with my mother's blood, perhaps!" exclaimed Francisco—"Never!"

"Not so, by God!" exclaimed Cain. "No, no; not quite so bad as that. In my mood I struck your mother, I grant it. I did not intend to injure her, but I did, and she died. I will not lie—that is the fact; and it is also the fact that I wept over her, Francisco, for I loved her as I do you. (It was a hasty bitter blow that," continued Cain, soliloquising, with his hand to his forehead, and unconscious of Francisco's presence at the moment. "It made me what I am, for it made me reckless.) Francisco," said Cain, raising his head, "I was bad, but I was no pirate when your mother lived. There is a curse upon me; that which I love most I treat the worst. Of all the world, I loved your mother most—yet did she from me receive most injury, and at last I caused her death. Next to your mother, whose memory I at once revere and love, and tremble when I think of—and each night does she appear to me—I have loved you, Francisco—for you, like her, have an angel's feelings; yet have I treated you as ill. You thwarted me, and you were right. Had you been wrong, I had not cared; but you were right, and it maddened me—your appeals by day—your mother's in my dreams."

Francisco's heart was softened; if not repentance, there was at least contrition. "Indeed, I pity you," replied Francisco.

"You must do more, Francisco; you must be friends with me," said Cain, again extending his hand.

"I cannot take that hand—it is too deeply dyed in blood," replied Francisco.

"Well, well, so would have said your mother. But hear me, Francisco," said Cain, lowering his voice to a whisper, lest he should be overheard—"I am tired of this life—perhaps sorry for what I have done—I wish to leave it—have wealth in plenty concealed where others know it not. Tell me, Francisco, shall we both quit this vessel, and live together happily and without doing wrong? You shall share all, Francisco. So, now, does that please you?"

"Yes; it pleases me to hear that you will abandon your lawless life, Captain Cain: but share your wealth I cannot, for how has it been obtained?"

"It cannot be returned, Francisco; I will do good with it. I will, indeed, Francisco. I—will—repent:" and again the hand was extended.

Francisco hesitated.

"I do—so help me, God! I *do* repent, Francisco," exclaimed the pirate-captain.

"And I, as a Christian, do forgive you all," replied Francisco, taking the still-extended hand. "May God forgive you, too!"

"Amen!" replied the pirate, solemnly, covering his face up in his hands.

In this position he remained some minutes, Francisco watching him in silence. At last the face was uncovered, and, to the surprise of Francisco, a tear was on the cheek of Cain, and his eyes suffused with moisture. Francisco no longer waited for the hand to be extended; he walked up to the captain, and, taking him by the hand, pressed it warmly.

"God bless you, boy! God bless you!" said Cain; "but leave me now."

Francisco returned on deck with a light and grateful heart. His countenance at once told those who were near him that he was not condemned, and many who dared not before take notice of, now saluted, him. The man who had taken him out of irons looked round; he was a creature of Hawkhurst, and he knew not how to act. Francisco observed him, and, with a wave of his hand, ordered him to go below. That Francisco was again in authority was instantly perceived; and the first proof of it was, that the now second mate reported to him that there was a sail on the weather bow.

Francisco took the glass to examine her. It was a large schooner under all sail. Not wishing that anyone should enter the cabin but himself, he went down to the cabin-door, and knocked before he entered, and reported the vessel.

"Thank you, Francisco; you must take Hawkhurst's duty for the present—it shall not be for long; and fear not that I shall make another capture. I swear to you I will not, Francisco. But this schooner—I know very well what she is: she has been looking after us some time; and a week ago, Francisco, I was anxious to meet her, that I might shed more blood. Now I will do all I can to avoid her, and escape. I can do no more, Francisco. I must not be taken."

"There I cannot blame you. To avoid her will be easy, I should think: the *Avenger* outsails everything."

"Except, I believe, the *Enterprise*, which is a sister-vessel. By heavens! it's a fair match," continued Cain, his feelings of combativeness returning for a moment; "and it will look like a craven to refuse the fight: but fear not, Francisco—I have promised you, and I shall keep my word."

Cain went on deck, and surveyed the vessel through the glass.

"Yes, it must be her," said he aloud, so as to be heard by the pirates; "she has been sent out by the admiral on purpose, full of his best men. What a pity we are so short-handed!"

"There's enough of us, sir," observed the boatswain.

"Yes," replied Cain, "if there was anything but hard blows to be got; but that is all, and I cannot spare more men. Ready, about!" continued he, walking aft.

The *Enterprise*, for she was the vessel in pursuit, was then about five miles distant, steering for the *Avenger*, who was on a wind. As soon as the *Avenger* tacked, the *Enterprise* took in her topmast studding-sail, and hauled her wind. This brought the *Enterprise* well on the weather-quarter of the *Avenger*, who now made all sail. The pirates, who had had quite enough of fighting, and were not stimulated by the presence of Hawkhurst, or the wishes of their captain, now showed as much anxiety to avoid as they usually did to seek a combat.

At the first trial of sailing between the two schooners there was no perceptible difference ; for half-an-hour they both continued on a wind, and when Edward Templemore examined his sextant a second time, he could not perceive that he had gained upon the *Avenger* one cable's length.

"We will keep away half a point," said Edward to his second in command. "We can afford that, and still hold the weather-gage."

The *Enterprise* was kept away, and increased her speed : they neared the *Avenger* more than a quarter of a mile.

"They are nearing us," observed Francisco ; "we must keep away a point."

Away went the *Avenger*, and would have recovered her distance, but the *Enterprise* was again steered more off the wind.

Thus did they continue altering their course until the studding-sails below and aloft were set by both, and the position of the schooners was changed ; the *Enterprise* now being on the starboard instead of the larboard quarter of the *Avenger*. The relative distance between the two schooners was, however, nearly the same, that is, about three miles and a half from each other ; and there was every prospect of a long and weary chase on the part of the *Enterprise*, who again kept away a point, to near the *Avenger*. Both vessels were now running to the eastward.

It was about an hour before dark that another sail hove in sight right a-head of the *Avenger*, and was clearly made out to be a frigate. The pirates were alarmed at this unfortunate circumstance, as there was little doubt but that she would prove a British cruiser; and, if not, they had equally reason to expect that she would assist in their capture. She had evidently perceived the two schooners, and had made all sail, tacking every quarter of an hour so as to keep her relative position. The *Enterprise*, who had also made out the frigate, to attract her attention, although not within range of the *Avenger*, commenced firing with her long-gun.

"This is rather awkward," observed Cain.

"It will be dark in less than an hour," observed Francisco; "and that is our only chance."

Cain reflected a minute.

"Get the long-gun ready, my lads! We will return her fire, Francisco, and hoist American colours; that will puzzle the frigate at all events, and the night may do the rest."

The long-gun of the *Avenger* was ready.

"I would not fire the long-gun," observed Francisco; "it will show our force, and will give no reason for our attempt to escape. Now, if we were to fire our broadside guns, the difference of report between them and the one of large calibre fired by the other schooner, would induce them to think that we are an American vessel."

"Very true," replied Cain; "and, as America is at peace with all the world, that our antagonist is a pirate. Hold fast the long-gun, there! and unship the starboard ports. See that that ensign blows out clear."

The *Avenger* commenced firing an occasional gun from her broadside, the reports of which were hardly to be heard by those on board of the frigate; while the long-gun of the *Enterprise* reverberated along the water, and its loud resonance was swept by the wind to the frigate to leeward.

Such was the state of affairs when the sun sank down in the wave, and darkness obscured the vessels from each other's sight, except with the assistance of the night-telescopes.

"What do you propose to do, Captain Cain?" said Francisco.

"I have made up my mind to do a bold thing. I will run down to the frigate as if for shelter; tell him that the other vessel is a pirate, and claim his protection. Leave me to escape afterwards; the moon will not rise till nearly one o'clock."

"That will be a bold *ruse*, indeed; but suppose you are once under her broadside, and she suspects you?"

"Then I will show her my heels. I should care nothing for her and her broadside if the schooner was not here."

In an hour after dark, the *Avenger* was close to the frigate, having steered directly for her. She shortened sail gradually, as if she had few hands on board; and, keeping his men out of sight, Cain ran under the stern of the frigate.

"Schooner, ahoy! What schooner is that?"

"*Eliza of Baltimore*, from Carthagena," replied Cain, rounding to under the lee of the man-of-war, and then continuing: "That vessel in chase is a pirate. Shall I send a boat on board?"

"No; keep company with us."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Cain.

"Hands, about ship!" now resounded with the boatswain's whistle on board of the frigate, and in a minute they were on the other tack. The *Avenger* also tacked, and kept close under the frigate's counter.

In the meantime Edward Templemore and those on board of the *Enterprise*, who, by the course steered, had gradually neared them, perceiving the motions of the two other vessels, were quite puzzled. At one time they thought they had made a mistake, and that it was not the pirate vessel; at another they surmised that the crew had mutinied, and surrendered to the frigate. Edward hauled his wind, and steered directly for them, to ascertain what the real facts were. The captain of the frigate, who had never lost sight of either vessel, was equally astonished at the boldness of the supposed pirate.

"Surely the rascal does not intend to board us," said he to the first lieutenant.

"There is no saying, sir; you know what a character he has: and some say there are three hundred men on board, which is equal to our ship's company."

"Or perhaps, sir, he will pass to windward of us, and gave us a broadside, and be off in the wind's-eye again."

"At all events we will have a broadside ready for him," replied the captain. "Clear away the starboard guns, and take out the tompions. Pipe starboard-watch to quarters."

The *Enterprise* closed with the frigate to windward, intending to run round her stern, and bring-to on the same tack.

"He does not shorten sail yet, sir," said the first lieutenant, as the schooner appeared skimming along about a cable's length on their weather-bow.

"And she is full of men, sir," said the master, looking at her through the night-glass.

"Fire a gun at her!" said the captain.

Bang! The smoke cleared away, and the schooner's foretopsail, which he was in the act of clewing up, lay over her side. The shot had struck the foremast of the *Enterprise*, and cut it in two below the catharpings. The *Enterprise* was, for the time, completely disabled.

"Schooner, ahoy! What schooner is that?"

"His Majesty's schooner *Enterprise*."

"Send a boat on board immediately.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Turn the hands up! Shorten sail!"

The top-gallants and courses of the frigate were taken in, and the mainsail hove to the mast.

"Signal-man, whereabouts is that other schooner now?"

"The schooner, sir? On the quarter," replied the signal-man, who, with everybody else on board, was so anxious about the *Enterprise*, that they had neglected to watch the motions of the supposed American. The man had replied at random, and he now jumped upon the signal-chests abaft to look for her. But she was not to be seen. Cain who had watched all that passed between the other two vessels, and had been prepared to slip off at a moment's warning, as soon as the gun was fired at the other schooner, had wore round, and made all sail on a wind. The night-glass discovered her half-a-mile astern; and the *ruse* was immediately perceived. The frigate filled and made sail, leaving Edward to return on board—for there was no time to stop for the boat—tacked, and gave chase. But the *Avenger* was soon in the wind's-eye of her; and at daylight was no longer to be seen.

In the meantime Edward Templemore had followed the frigate as soon as he could set sail on his vessel, indignant at his treatment, and vowing that he would demand a court-martial. About noon the frigate rejoined him, when matters were fully explained. Annoyed as they all felt at not having captured the pirate, it was unanimously agreed, that by his audacity and coolness he deserved to escape. It was found that the mast of the *Enterprise* could be fished and scarfed, so as to enable her to continue her cruise. The carpenters of the frigate were sent on board; and in two days the injury was repaired, and Edward Templemore once more went in pursuit of the *Avenger*.

Chapter XV

THE MISTAKE

The *Avenger* stood under a press of sail to the northward. She had left her pursuers far behind; and there was not a speck on the horizon, when, on the second morning, Francisco, who had resumed his berth in the captain's cabin, went up on deck. Notwithstanding the request of Cain, Francisco refused to take any part in the command of the schooner, considering himself as a passenger, or prisoner on parole. He had not been on deck but a few minutes when he observed the two Spanish fishermen belonging to the establishment of Don Cumanos conversing together forward. Their capture had quite escaped his memory, and he went forward to speak to them. Their surprise at seeing him was great, until Francisco informed them of what had passed. They then recounted what had occurred to them, and showed their thumbs, which had been put into screws to torture from them the truth. Francisco shuddered, but consoled them, promising that they should soon be at liberty, and return to their former master.

As Francisco returned from forward, he found Hawkhurst on the deck. Their eyes met and flashed in enmity. Hawkhurst was pale from loss of blood, and evidently suffering; but he had been informed of the apparent reconciliation between Francisco and the captain, and he could no longer remain in his bed. He knew, also, how the captain had avoided the combat with the *Enterprise;* and something told him that there was a revolution of feeling in more than in one point. Suffering as he was, he resolved to be a spectator of what passed, and to watch narrowly. For both Francisco and Cain he had imbibed a deadly hatred, and was watching for an opportunity to wreak his revenge. At present they were too powerful; but he felt that the time was coming when he might be triumphant.

Francisco passed Hawkhurst without speaking.

"You are at liberty again, I see," observed Hawkhurst, with a sneer.

"I am not, at all events, indebted to you for it," replied Francisco, haughtily; "nor for my life either."

"No, indeed; but I believe that I am indebted to you for this bullet in my shoulder," replied the mate.

"You are," replied Francisco, coolly.

"And depend upon it the debt shall be repaid with usury."

"I have no doubt of it, if ever it is in your power; but I fear you not."

As Francisco made this reply, the captain came up the ladder. Hawkhurst turned away, and walked forward.

"There is mischief in that man, Francisco," said the captain, in an undertone; "I hardly know whom to trust; but he must be watched. He is tampering with the men, and has been for some time; not that it is of much consequence, if he does but remain quiet for a little while. The command of this vessel he is welcome to very soon; but if he attempts too early——"

"I have those I can trust to," replied Francisco. "Let us go below."

Francisco sent for Pompey, the Krouman, and gave him his directions in the presence of the captain. That night, to the surprise of all, Hawkhurst kept his watch; and, notwithstanding the fatigue, appeared every day to be rapidly recovering from his wound.

Nothing occurred for several days, during which the *Avenger* still continued her course. What the captain's intentions were did not transpire; they were known only to Francisco.

"We are very short of water, sir," reported Hawkhurst, one morning; "shall we have enough to last us to where we are going?"

"How many days of full allowance have we on board?"

"Not above twelve at the most."

"Then we must go on half allowance," replied Cain.

"The ship's company wish to know where we are going, sir."

"Have they deputed you to ask the question?"

"Not exactly, sir: but I wish to know myself," replied Hawkhurst, with an insolent air.

"Turn the hands up," replied Cain: "as one of the ship's company under my orders, you will, with the others, receive the information you require."

The crew of the pirate collected aft.

"My lads!" said Cain, "I understand, from the first mate, that you are anxious to know where you are going? In reply, I acquaint you, that, having so many wounded men on board, and so much plunder in the hold, I intend to repair to our old rendezvous when we were formerly in this part of the world—the *Caicos*. Is there any other question you may wish to ask of me?"

"Yes," replied Hawkhurst; "we wish to know what your intentions are relative to that young man, Francisco. We have lost immense wealth; we have now thirty men wounded in the hammocks, and nine we left dead on the shore; and I have a bullet through my body: all which has been occasioned by him. We demand justice!"

Here Hawkhurst was supported by several of the pirates; and there were many voices which repeated the cry of "Justice!"

"My men! You demand justice, and you shall have it," replied Cain. "This lad you all know well; I have brought him up as a child. He has always disliked our mode of life, and has often requested to leave it, and has been refused. He challenged me by our own laws, 'Blood for blood!' He wounded me; but he was right in his challenge, and, therefore, I bear no malice. Had I been aware that he was to have been sent on shore to die with hunger, I would not have permitted it. What crime had he committed? None; or, if any, it was against me. He was then sentenced to death for no crime, and you yourselves exclaimed against it. Is it not true?"

"Yes—yes," replied the majority of the pirates.

"By a miracle he escapes, and is put in charge of another man's property. There was no crime in defending that property. He is made a prisoner, and now you demand justice. You shall have it. Allowing that his life is forfeit for this offence—you have already sentenced him, and left him to death unjustly, and therefore are bound in justice to give his life in this instance. I ask it, my men, not only as his right, but as a favour to your captain."

"Agreed! it's all fair!" exclaimed the majority of the pirate's crew.

"My men, I thank you," replied Cain; "and, in return, as soon as we arrive at the Caicos, my share of the plunder on board shall be divided amongst you."

This last observation completely turned the tables in favour of the captain; and those who had joined Hawkhurst now sided with the captain. Hawkhurst looked like a demon.

"Let those who choose to be bought off take your money," replied he; "but *I will not.* Blood for blood I will have; and so I give you warning. That lad's life is mine, and have it I will! Prevent me, if you can!" continued the mate; holding up his clenched hand, and shaking it almost in the pirate-captain's face.

The blood mantled even to the forehead of Cain. One moment he raised himself to his utmost height, then, seizing a handspike, which lay near, he felled Hawkhurst to the deck.

"Take that, for your mutiny!" exclaimed Cain, putting his foot on Hawkhurst's neck. "My lads, I appeal to you. Is this man worthy to be in command, as mate? Is he to live?"

"No! no!" cried the pirates; "Death!"

Francisco stepped forward. "My men, you have granted your captain one favour; grant me another—which is the life of this man. Recollect how often he has led you to conquest, and how brave and faithful he has been until now! Recollect that he is suffering under his wound, which has made him irritable. Command you he cannot any longer, as he will never have the confidence of your captain; but let him live, and quit the vessel."

"Be it so, if you agree," replied Cain, looking at the men; "I do not seek his life."

The pirates consented. Hawkhurst rose slowly from the deck, and was assisted below to his cabin. The second mate was then appointed as the first, and the choice of the man to fill up the vacancy was left to the pirate crew.

For three days after this scene all was quiet and orderly on board of the pirate. Cain, now that he had more fully made up his mind how to act, imparted to Francisco his plans; and his giving up to the men his share of the booty still on board was, to Francisco, an earnest of his good intentions. A cordiality, even a kind of feeling which never existed before, was created between them; but of Francisco's mother, and the former events of his own life, the pirate never spoke. Francisco more than once put questions on the subject; the answer was,—"You shall know some of these days, Francisco, but not yet; you would hate me too much."

The *Avenger* was now clear of the English isles, and, with light winds, running down the shores of Porto Rico. In the evening of the day on which they had made the land, the schooner was becalmed about three miles from the shore, and the new first mate proposed that he should land in the boat, and obtain a further supply of water, from a fall which they had discovered with the glasses. As this was necessary, Cain gave his consent, and the boat quitted the vessel full of breakers.

Now it happened that the *Avenger* lay becalmed abreast of the country-seat of Don d'Alfarez, the governor of the island. Clara had seen the schooner; and, as usual, had thrown out the white curtain as a signal of recognition; for there was no perceptible difference, even to a sailor, at that distance, between the *Avenger* and the *Enterprise*. She had hastened down to the beach, and hurried into the cave, awaiting the arrival of Edward Templemore. The pirate-boat landed at the very spot of rendezvous, and the mate leaped out of the boat. Clara flew to receive her Edward, and was instantly seized by the mate, before she discovered her mistake.

"Holy Virgin! who and what are you?" cried she; struggling to disengage herself.

"One who is very fond of a pretty girl!" replied the pirate, still detaining her.

"Unhand me, wretch!" cried Clara; "are you aware whom you are addressing?"

"Not I! nor do I care;" replied the pirate.

"You will, perhaps, sir, when you learn that I am the daughter of the governor!" exclaimed Clara, pushing him away.

"Yes! by heavens! you are right, pretty lady, I do care; for a governor's daughter will fetch a good ransom at all events. So come, my lads, a little help here; for she is as strong as a young mule. Never mind the water, throw the breakers into the boat again! we have a prize worth taking!"

Clara screamed; but she was gagged with a handkerchief, and lifted into the boat, which immediately rowed back to the schooner.

When the mate came on board and reported his capture, the pirates were delighted at the prospect of an addition to their prize-money. Cain could not, of course, raise any objections; it would have been so different from his general practice, that it would have strengthened suspicions already set afloat by Hawkhurst, which Cain was most anxious just then to remove. He ordered the girl to be taken down into the cabin, hoisted in the boat, and, the breeze springing up again, made sail.

In the meantime Francisco was consoling the unfortunate Clara, and assuring her that she need be under no alarm; promising her protection from himself and the captain.

The poor girl wept bitterly; and it was not until Cain came down into the cabin, and corroborated the assurances of Francisco, that she could assume any degree of composure; but to find friends when she had expected every insult and degradation—for Francisco had acknowledged that the vessel was a pirate—was some consolation. The kindness and attention of Francisco restored her to comparative tranquillity.

The next day, she confided to him the reason of her coming to the beach, and her mistake with regard to the two vessels; and Francisco and Cain promised her that they would themselves pay her ransom, and not wait until she heard from her father. To divert her thoughts, Francisco talked much about Edward Templemore; and on that subject Clara could always talk. Every circumstance attending the amour was soon known to Francisco.

But the *Avenger* did not gain her rendezvous as soon as she expected. When to the northward of Porto Rico, an English frigate bore down upon her, and the *Avenger* was obliged to run for it. Before the wind is always a schooner's worst point of sailing; and the chase was continued for three days before a fresh wind from the southward, until they had passed the Bahama Isles.

The pirates suffered much from want of water, as it was necessary still further to reduce their allowance. The frigate was still in sight, although the *Avenger* had dropped her astern when the wind became light, and at last it subsided into a calm, which lasted two days more. The boats of the frigate were hoisted out on the eve of the second day to attack the schooner, then distant five miles, when a breeze sprang up from the northward, and the schooner, being then to windward, left the enemy hull down.

It was not until the next day that Cain ventured to run again to the southward, to procure at one of the keys the water so much required. At last it was obtained, but with difficulty and much loss of time, from the scantiness of the supply, and they again made sail for the Caicos. But they were so much impeded by contrary winds and contrary currents, that it was not until three weeks after they had been chased from Porto Rico that they made out the low land of their former rendezvous.

We must now return to Edward Templemore in the *Enterprise*, whom we left off the coast of South America, in search of the *Avenger*, which had so strangely slipped through their fingers. Edward had examined the whole coast, ran through the passage and round Trinidad, and then started off to the Leeward Isles in his pursuit. He had spoken every vessel he met with, without gaining any information, and had at last arrived off Porto Rico.

This was no time to think of Clara; but, as it was not out of his way, he had run down the island; and as it was just before dark before he arrived off that part of the coast where the governor resided, he had hove-to for a little while, and had examined the windows; but the signal of recognition was not made; and, after waiting till dark, he again made sail, mad with disappointment, and fearing that all had been discovered by the governor; whereas, the fact was, that he had arrived only two days after the forcible abduction of Clara. Once more he directed his attention to the discovery of the pirate; and, after a fortnight's examination of the inlets and bays of the Island of St Domingo, without success, his provisions and water being nearly expended, he returned, in no very happy mood, to Port Royal.

In the meantime, the disappearance of Clara had created the greatest confusion in Porto Rico; and, upon the examination of her attendant, who was confronted by the friar and the duenna, the amour of her mistress was confessed. The appearance of the *Avenger* off the coast on that evening confirmed their ideas that the Donna Clara had been carried off by the English lieutenant; and Don d'Alfarez immediately despatched a vessel to Jamaica, complaining of the outrage, and demanding the restoration of his daughter.

This vessel arrived at Port Royal a few days before the *Enterprise*, and the admiral was very much astonished. He returned a very polite answer to Don d'Alfarez, promising an investigation immediately upon the arrival of the schooner, and to send a vessel with the result of the said investigation.

"This is a pretty business," said the admiral to his secretary. "Young madcap! I sent him to look after a pirate, and he goes after the governor's daughter! By the lord Harry! Mr Templemore, but you and I shall have an account to settle."

"I can hardly believe it, sir," replied the secretary; "and yet it does look suspicious. But on so short an acquaintance——"

"Who knows that, Mr Hadley? Send for his logs, and let us examine them; he may have been keeping up the acquaintance."

The logs of the *Enterprise* were examined,— and there were the fatal words—Porto Rico—Porto Rico, bearing in every division of the compass; and in every separate cruise, nay, even when the schooner was charged with despatches.

"Plain enough!" said the admiral. "Confounded young scamp! to embroil me this way. Not that his marrying the girl is any business of mine; but I will punish him for disobedience of orders, at all events! Try him by a court-martial, by heavens!"

The secretary made no reply: he knew very well that the admiral would do no such thing.

"The *Enterprise* anchored at daylight, sir;" reported the secretary, as the admiral sat down to breakfast.

"And where's Mr Templemore?"

"He is outside, in the veranda. They have told him below of what he has been accused, and he swears it is false. I believe him, sir; for he appears half mad at the intelligence."

"Stop a moment! Have you looked over his log?"

"Yes, sir. It appears that he was off Porto Rico on the 19th; but the Spanish governor's letter says that he was there on the 17th, and again made his appearance on the 19th. I mentioned it to him; and he declares, upon his honour, that he was only there on the 19th, as stated in his log."

"Well! let him come in and speak for himself."

Edward came in, in a state of great agitation.

"Well, Mr Templemore!—you have been playing pretty tricks! What is all this, sir?—Where is the girl, sir—the governor's daughter?"

"Where is she, sir, I cannot pretend to say; but I feel convinced that she has been carried off by the pirates."

"Pirates!—Poor girl! I pity her—and—I pity you, too, Edward. Come, sit down here, and tell me all that has happened."

Edward knew the Admiral's character so well, that he immediately disclosed all that had passed between him and Clara. He then stated how the *Avenger* had escaped him by deceiving the frigate; and the agreement made with Clara to meet for the future on the beach; with his conviction that the pirate schooner, so exactly similar in appearance to the *Enterprise*, must have preceded him at Porto Rico, and have carried off the object of his attachment.

Although Edward might have been severely taken to task, yet the Admiral pitied him, and therefore said nothing about his visits to Porto Rico. When breakfast was over, he ordered the signal to be made for a sloop of war to prepare to weigh, and the *Enterprise* to be re-victualled by the boats of the squadron.

"Now, Edward, you and the *Comus* shall sail in company after this rascally pirate; and I trust you will give me a good account of her, and also of the governor's daughter. Cheer up, my boy! depend upon it, they will try for ransom before they do her any injury."

That evening the *Enterprise* and *Comus* sailed on their expedition; and, having run by Porto Rico, and delivered a letter to the governor, they steered to the northward, and early the next morning made the land of the Caicos, just as the *Avenger* had skirted the reefs, and bore up for the narrow entrance.

"There she is!" exclaimed Edward! "there she is, by heavens!" making the signal for the enemy; which was immediately answered by the *Comus*.

Chapter XVI

THE CAICOS

The small patch of islands called the Caicos or Cayques, is situated about two degrees to the northward of St Domingo, and are nearly the southernmost of a chain which extend up to the Bahamas. Most of the islands of this chain are uninhabited, but were formerly the resort of piratical vessels, as the reefs and shoals with which they are all surrounded afforded them protection from their larger pursuers; and the passages through this dangerous navigation being known only to the pirates who frequented them, proved an additional security. The largest of the Caicos islands forms a curve like an opened horse-shoe to the southward, with safe and protected anchorage when once in the bay on the southern side; but, previous to arriving at the anchorage, there are coral reefs extending upwards of forty miles, through which it is necessary to conduct a vessel. This passage is extremely intricate, but was well known to Hawkhurst, who had hitherto been pilot. Cain was not so well acquainted with it, and it required the greatest care in taking in the vessel, as, on the present occasion, Hawkhurst could not be called upon for this service. The islands themselves, for there were several of them, were composed of coral rock; a few cocoa-trees raised their lofty heads where there was sufficient earth for vegetation, and stunted brushwood rose up between the interstices of the rocks. But the chief peculiarity of the islands, and which rendered them suitable to those who frequented them, was the numerous caves with which the rocks were perforated, some above high-water mark, but the majority with the sea-water flowing in and out of them, in some cases merely rushing in, and, at high-water, filling deep pools, which were detached from each other when the tide receded; in others, with a sufficient depth of water, at all times, to allow you to pull in with a large boat. It is hardly necessary to observe how convenient the higher and dry caves were as receptacles for articles which were intended to be concealed until an opportunity occurred for disposing of them.

In our last chapter we stated, that, just as the *Avenger* had entered the passage through the reefs, the *Comus* and *Enterprise* hove in sight, and discovered her; but it will be necessary to explain the positions of the vessels. The *Avenger* had entered the southern channel, with the wind from the southward, and had carefully sounded her way for about four miles, under little or no sail.

The *Enterprise* and *Comus* had been examining Turk's Island, to the eastward of the Caicos, and had passed to the northward of it on the larboard tack, standing in for the northern point of the reef, which joined on to the great Caicos Island. They were, therefore, in a situation to intercept the *Avenger* before she arrived at her anchorage, had it not been for the reefs which barred their passage. The only plan which the English vessels could act upon, was to beat to the southward, so as to arrive at the entrance of the passage, when the *Enterprise* would, of course, find sufficient water to follow the *Avenger;* for, as the passage was too narrow to beat through, and the wind was from the southward, the *Avenger* could not possibly escape. She was caught in a trap; and all that she had to trust to was the defence which she might be able to make in her stronghold against the force which could be employed in the attack. The breeze was fresh from the southward, and appeared inclined to increase, when the *Comus* and *Enterprise* made all sail, and worked, in short tacks, outside the reef.

On board the *Avenger*, the enemy and their motions were clearly distinguished, and Cain perceived that he was in an awkward dilemma. That they would be attacked he had no doubt; and, although at any other time he would almost have rejoiced in such an opportunity of discomfiting his assailants, yet now he thought very differently, and would have sacrificed almost everything to have been able to avoid the rencontre, and be permitted quietly to withdraw himself from his associates without the spilling of more blood. Francisco was equally annoyed at this unfortunate collision; but no words were exchanged between him and the pirate-captain during the time that they were on deck.

It was about nine o'clock, when having safely passed nearly half through the channel, that Cain ordered the kedge-anchor to be dropped, and sent down the people to their breakfast. Francisco went down into the cabin, and was explaining their situation to Clara, when Cain entered. He threw himself on the locker, and appeared lost in deep and sombre meditation.

"What do you intend to do?" said Francisco.

"I do not know; I will not decide myself, Francisco," replied Cain: "if I were to act upon my own judgment, probably I should allow the schooner to remain where she is. They can only attack in the boats, and, in such a case, I do not fear; whereas, if we run right through, we allow the other schooner to follow us without defending the passage, and we may then be attacked by her in the deep water inside, and overpowered by the number of men the two vessels will be able to bring against us. On the other hand, we certainly may defend the schooner from the shore as well as on board, but we are weak-handed. I shall, however, call up the ship's company, and let them decide. God knows! if left to me, I would not fight at all."

"Is there no way of escape?" resumed Francisco.

"Yes, we might abandon the schooner; and this night, when they would not expect it, run with the boats through the channel, between the great island and the north Cayque, but that I dare not propose, and the men would not listen to it; indeed, I very much doubt if the enemy will allow us the time; I knew this morning, long before we saw those vessels, that my fate would be decided before the sun went down."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this, Francisco," said Cain; "that your mother, who always has visited me in my dreams whenever anything, dreadful now to think of! was about to take place, appeared to me last night, and there was sorrow and pity in her sweet face as she mournfully waved her hand as if to summon me to follow her. Yes, thank God! she no longer looked upon me as for many years she has done."

Francisco made no answer; and Cain again seemed to be lost in meditation.

After a little while Cain rose, and, taking a small packet from one of the drawers, put it into the hands of Francisco.

"Preserve that," said the pirate-captain; "should any accident happen to me, it will tell you who was your mother: and it also contains directions for finding treasure which I have buried. I leave everything to you, Francisco. It has been unfairly obtained; but you are not the guilty party, and there are none to claim it. Do not answer me now. You may find friends, whom you will make after I am gone, of the same opinion as I am. I tell you again, be careful of that packet."

"I see little chance of it availing me," replied Francisco; "if I live, shall I not be considered as a pirate?"

"No, no; you can prove the contrary."

"I have my doubts; but God's will be done."

"Yes, God's will be done!" said Cain, mournfully; "I dared not have said that a month ago." And the pirate-captain went on deck, followed by Francisco.

The crew of the *Avenger* were summoned aft, and called upon to decide as to the measures they considered to be most advisable. They preferred weighing the anchor and running into the bay, where they would be able to defend the schooner, in their opinion, much better than by remaining where they were.

The crew of the pirate schooner weighed the anchor, and continued their precarious course: the breeze had freshened, and the water was in strong ripples, so that they could no longer see the danger beneath her bottom. In the meantime the sloop of war and *Enterprise* continued to turn to windward outside of the reef.

By noon the wind had considerably increased, and the breakers now turned and broke in wild foam over the coral reefs, in every direction. The sail was still more reduced on board of the *Avenger*, and her difficulties increased from the rapidity of her motion.

A storm-jib was set, and the other hauled down; yet even under this small sail she flew before the wind.

Cain stood at the bowsprit, giving his directions to the helmsman. More than once they grazed the rocks, and were clear again. Spars were towed astern, and every means resorted to, to check her way. They had no guide but the breaking of the wild water on each side of them.

"Why should not Hawkhurst, who knows the passage so well, be made to pilot us?" said the boatswain to those who were near him on the forecastle.

"To be sure, let's have him up," cried several of the crew; and some of them went down below.

In a minute they reappeared with Hawkhurst, whom they led forward: he did not make any resistance, and the crew demanded that he should pilot the vessel.

"And suppose I will not," said Hawkhurst, coolly.

"Then you lose your passage, that's all," replied the boatswain; "is it not so, my men?" continued he, appealing to the crew.

"Yes; either take us safe in, or—overboard," replied several.

"I do not mind that threat, my lads," replied Hawkhurst; "you have all known me as a good man and true, and it's not likely that I shall desert you now. Well, since your captain there cannot save you, I suppose I must; but," exclaimed he, looking about him—"how's this? Why, we are out of the passage already. Yes, and whether we can get into it again I cannot tell."

"We are not out of the passage," said Cain; "you know we are not."

"Well, then, if the captain knows better than I, he had better take you through," rejoined Hawkhurst.

But the crew thought differently, and insisted that Hawkhurst, who well knew the channel, should take charge. Cain retired aft, as Hawkhurst went out on the bowsprit.

"I will do my best, my lads," said Hawkhurst; "but, recollect, if we strike in trying to get into the right channel, do not blame me. Starboard a little—starboard yet—steady so—there's the true passage, my lads!" cried he, pointing to some smoother water between the breakers—"port a little—steady."

But Hawkhurst, who knew that he was to be put on shore as soon as convenient, had resolved to lose the schooner, even if his own life was forfeited, and he was now running her out of the passage on the rocks. A minute after he had conned her, she struck heavily again and again; the third time she struck she came broadside to the wind and heeled over: a sharp coral rock found its way through her slight timbers and planking, and the water poured in rapidly.

During this there was a dead silence on the part of the marauders.

"My lads," said Hawkhurst, "I have done my best, and now you may throw me overboard if you please. It was not my fault, but his," continued he, pointing to the captain.

"It is of little consequence whose fault it was, Mr Hawkhurst," replied Cain; "we will settle that point by-and-bye; at present we have too much on our hands. Out boats, men! as fast as you can, and let every man provide himself with arms and ammunition. Be cool! the schooner is fixed hard enough, and will not go down; we shall save everything by-and-bye."

The pirates obeyed the orders of the captain. The three boats were hoisted out and lowered down. In the first were placed all the wounded men and Clara d'Alfarez, who was assisted up by Francisco. As soon as the men had provided themselves with arms, Francisco, to protect Clara, offered to take charge of her, and the boat shoved off.

The men-of-war had seen the *Avenger* strike on the rocks, and the preparations of the crew to take to their boats. They immediately hove-to, hoisted out and manned their own boats, with the hopes of cutting them off before they could gain the island, and prepare for a vigorous defence; for, although the vessels could not approach the reefs, there was sufficient water in many places for the boats to pass over them. Shortly after Francisco, in the first boat, had shoved off from the *Avenger*, the boats of the men-of-war were darting through the surf to intercept them. The pirates perceived this, and hastened their arrangements; a second boat soon left her, and into that Hawkhurst leaped as it was shoving off. Cain remained on board, and going round the lower decks to ascertain if any of the wounded men were left, he then quitted the schooner in the last boat, and followed the others, being about a quarter of a mile astern of the second, in which Hawkhurst had secured his place.

At the time that Cain quitted the schooner, it was difficult to say whether the men-of-war's boats would succeed in intercepting any of the pirate's boats. Both parties exerted themselves to their utmost; and, when the first boat, with Francisco and Clara, landed, the headmost of the assailants was not much more than half a mile from them; but shallow water intervening, there was a delay which was favourable to the pirate. Hawkhurst landed in his boat as the launch of the *Comus* fired her eighteen-pound carronade. The last boat was yet two hundred yards from the beach, when another shot from the *Comus's* launch, which had been unable hitherto to find a passage through the reef, struck her on the counter, and she filled and went down.

"He is gone!" exclaimed Francisco, who had led Clara to a cave, and stood at the mouth of it to protect her: "they have sunk his boat—no, he is swimming to the shore, and will be here now, long before the English seamen can land.

This was true. Cain was breasting the water manfully, making for a small cove nearer to where the boat was sunk than the one in which Francisco had landed with Clara and the wounded men, and divided from the other by a ridge of rocks which separated the sandy beach, and extended some way into the water before they were submerged. Francisco could easily distinguish the pirate-captain from the other men, who also were swimming for the beach; for Cain was far ahead of them, and, as he gained nearer to the shore, he was shut from Francisco's sight by the ridge of rocks. Francisco, anxious for his safety, climbed up the rocks and was watching. Cain was within a few yards of the beach, when there was the report of a musket; the pirate captain was seen to raise his body convulsively half out of the water—he floundered—the clear blue wave was discoloured—he sank, and was seen no more.

Francisco darted forward from the rocks, and perceived Hawkhurst standing beneath them with the musket in his hand, which he was recharging.

"Villain!" exclaimed Francisco, "you shall account for this."

Hawkhurst had reprimed his musket, and shut the pan.

"Not to you," replied Hawkhurst, levelling his piece, and taking aim at Francisco.

The ball struck Francisco on the breast; he reeled back from his position, staggered across the sand, gained the cave, and fell at the feet of Clara.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed the poor girl, "are *you* hurt; who is there, then, to protect me?"

"I hardly know," replied Francisco faintly; and, at intervals, "I feel no wound. I feel stronger;" and Francisco put his hand to his heart.

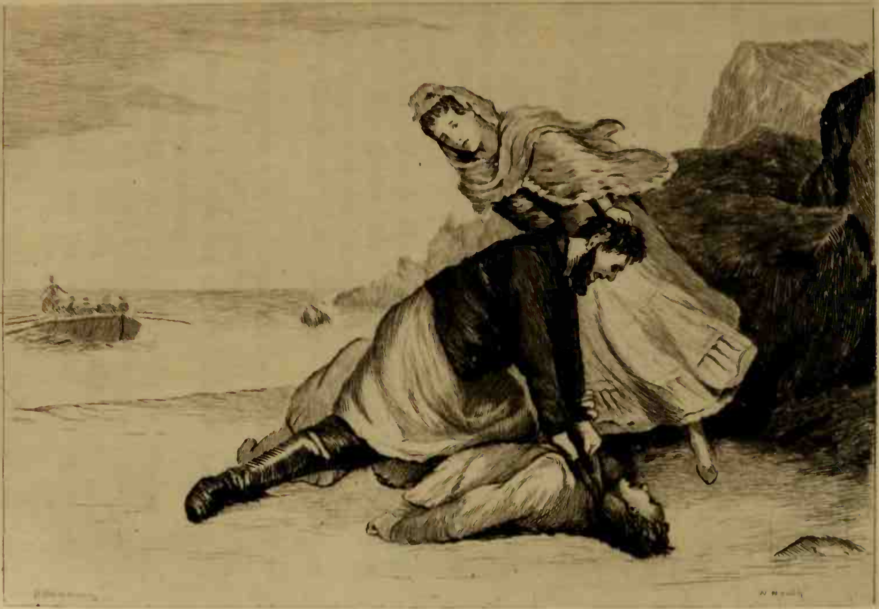
Clara opened his vest, and found that the packet given to Francisco by Cain, and which he had deposited in his breast, had been struck by the bullet, which had done him no injury further than the violent concussion of the blow—notwithstanding he was faint from the shock, and his head fell upon Clara's bosom.

But we must relate the proceedings of those who were mixed up in this exciting scene. Edward Templemore had watched from his vessel, with an eager and painful curiosity, the motions of the schooner—her running on the rocks, and the subsequent actions of the intrepid marauders. The long telescope enabled him to perceive distinctly all that passed, and his feelings were increased into a paroxysm of agony when his straining eyes beheld the white and fluttering habiliments of a female for a moment at the gunwale of the stranded vessel—her descent, as it appeared to him, nothing loth, into the boat—the arms held out to receive, and the extension of hers to meet those offered—could it be Clara? Where was the reluctance, the unavailing attempts at resistance which should have characterised her situation? Excited by feelings which he dared not analyse, he threw down his glass, and, seizing his sword, sprang into his boat, which was already manned alongside, desiring the others to follow him. For once, and the only time in his existence when approaching the enemy, did he feel his heart sink within him—a cold tremor ran through his whole frame, and, as he called to mind the loose morals and desperate habits of the pirates, horrible thoughts entered his imagination. As he neared the shore, he stood up in the stern-sheets of the boat, pale, haggard, and with trembling lips—and the intensity of his feelings would have been intolerable but for a more violent thirst for revenge. He clenched his sword, while the quick throbs of his heart seemed, at every pulsation, to repeat to him his thoughts of blood! blood! blood! He approached the small bay, and perceived that there was a female at the mouth of the cave—nearer and nearer, and he was certain that it was his Clara—her name was on his lips when he heard the two shots fired one after another by Hawkhurst—he saw the retreat and fall of Francisco—when, madness to behold! he perceived Clara rush forward, and there lay the young man supported by her, and with his head upon her bosom—could he believe what he saw—could she really be his betrothed. Yes, there she was, supporting the handsome figure of a young man, and that man a pirate—she had even put her hand into his vest, and was now watching over his reviving form. Edward could bear no more; he covered his eyes, and, now maddened with jealousy, in a voice of thunder, he called out—

"Give way, my lads! for your lives, give way!"

The gig was within half-a-dozen strokes of the oar from the beach, and Clara, unconscious of wrong, had just taken the packet of papers from Francisco's vest, when Hawkhurst made his appearance from behind the rocks which separated the two little sandy coves. Francisco had recovered his breath, and, perceiving the approach of Hawkhurst, he sprang upon his feet to recover his musket; but, before he could succeed, Hawkhurst had closed in with him, and a short and dreadful struggle ensued. It would soon have terminated fatally to Francisco, for the superior strength of Hawkhurst had enabled him to bear down the body of his opponent with his knee, and he was fast strangling him by twisting his handkerchief round his throat, while Clara shrieked, and attempted in vain to tear the pirate from him. As the prostrate Francisco was fast blackening into a corpse, and the maiden screamed for pity, and became frantic in her efforts for his rescue, the boat dashed high up on the sand; and, with the bound of a maddened tiger, Edward sprang upon Hawkhurst, tearing him down on his back, and severing his wrist with his sword-blade until his hold of Francisco was relaxed, and he wrestled in his own defence.

"Seize him, my lads!" said Edward, pointing with his left hand to Hawkhurst; as with his sword directed to the body of Francisco he bitterly continued, "*this victim is mine!*" But, whatever were his intentions, they were frustrated by Clara's recognition, who shrieked out—"My Edward!" sprang into his arms, and was immediately in a state of insensibility.



The seamen who had secured Hawkhurst looked upon the scene with curious astonishment — while Edward waited with mingled feelings of impatience and doubt for Clara's recovery—he wished to be assured by her that he was mistaken, and he turned again and again from her face to that of Francisco, who was fast recovering. During this painful suspense, Hawkhurst was bound, and made to sit down.

"Edward! dear Edward!" said Clara, at last, in a faint voice, clinging more closely to him; "and am I then rescued by thee, dearest?"

Edward felt the appeal; but his jealousy had not yet subsided.

"Who is that, Clara?" said he, sternly.

"It is Francisco. No pirate, Edward—but my preserver."

"Ha, ha!"—laughed Hawkhurst, with a bitter sneer, for he perceived how matters stood.

Edward Templemore turned towards him with an inquiring look.

"Ha, ha!" continued Hawkhurst: "why, he is the captain's son. No pirate, eh? Well, what will women not swear to, to save those they dote upon?"

"If the captain's son," said Edward, "why were you contending?"

"Because just now I shot his scoundrel father."

"Edward!" said Clara, solemnly, "this is no time for explanation, but, as I hope for mercy, what I have said is true; believe not that villain."

"Yes," said Francisco, who was now sitting up, "believe him when he says that he shot the captain, for that is true; but, sir, if you value your own peace of mind, believe nothing to the prejudice of that young lady."

"I hardly know what to believe," muttered Edward Templemore; "but, as the lady says, this is no time for explanation. With your permission, madam," said he to Clara, "my coxswain will see you in safety on board of the schooner, or the other vessel, if you prefer it; my duty will not allow me to accompany you."

Clara darted a reproachful yet fond look on Edward, as, with swimming eyes, she was led by the coxswain to the boat, which had been joined by the launch of the *Comus*, the crew of which were, with their officers, wading to the beach. The men of the gig remained until they had given Hawkhurst and Francisco in charge of the other seamen, and then shoved off with Clara for the schooner. Edward Templemore gave one look at the gig as it conveyed Clara on board, and, ordering Hawkhurst and Francisco to be taken to the launch, and a guard to be kept over them, went up, with the remainder of the men, in pursuit of the pirates.

During the scene we have described, the other boats of the men-of-war had landed on the island, and the *Avenger's* crew, deprived of their leaders, and scattered in every direction, were many of them slain or captured. In about two hours it was supposed that the majority of the pirates had been accounted for, and the prisoners being now very numerous, it was decided that the boats should return with them to the *Comus*, the captain of which vessel, as commanding officer, would then issue orders as to their future proceedings.

The captured pirates, when mustered on the deck of the *Comus*, amounted to nearly sixty, out of which number one-half were those who had been sent on shore wounded, and had surrendered without resistance. Of killed there were fifteen; and it was conjectured that as many more had been drowned in the boat, when she was sunk by the shot from the carronade of the launch. Although, by the account given by the captured pirates, the majority were secured, yet there was reason to suppose that some were still left on the island, concealed in the caves.

As the captain of the *Comus* had orders to return as soon as possible, he decided to sail immediately for Port Royal with the prisoners, leaving the *Enterprise* to secure the remainder, if there were any, and recover anything of value which might be left in the wreck of the *Avenger*, and then to destroy her.

With the usual celerity of the service these orders were obeyed. The pirates, among whom Francisco was included, were secured, the boats hoisted up, and, in half-an-hour, the *Comus* displayed her ensign, and made all sail on a wind, leaving Edward Templemore, with the *Enterprise*, at the back of the reef, to perform the duties entailed upon him; and Clara, who was on board of the schooner, to remove the suspicion and jealousy which had arisen in the bosom of her lover.

Chapter XVII

THE TRIAL

In a week the *Comus* arrived at Port Royal, and the captain went up to the Penn to inform the admiral of the successful result of the expedition.

"Thank God," said the admiral, "we have caught these villains at last: a little hanging will do them no harm. The captain, you say, was drowned?"

"So it is reported, sir," replied Captain Manly; "he was in the last boat which left the schooner, and she was sunk by a shot from the launch."

"I am sorry for that; the death was too good for him. However, we must make an example of the rest: they must be tried by the Admiralty Court, which has the jurisdiction of the high seas. Send them on shore, Manly, and we wash our hands of them."

"Very good, sir; but there are still some left on the island, we have reason to believe; and the *Enterprise* is in search of them."

"By-the-bye, did Templemore find his lady?"

"Oh, yes, sir; and—all's right, I believe; but I had very little to say with him on the subject."

"Humph!" replied the admiral, "I am glad to hear it. Well, send them on shore, Manly, to the proper authorities. If any more be found, they must be hung afterwards when Templemore brings them in. I am more pleased at having secured these scoundrels than if we had taken a French frigate."

About three weeks after this conversation, the secretary reported to the admiral that the *Enterprise* had made her number outside; but that she was becalmed, and would not probably be in until the evening.

"That's a pity," replied the admiral; "for the pirates are to be tried this morning. He may have more of them on board."

"Very true, sir; but the trial will hardly be over to-day: the judge will not be in court till one o'clock at the soonest."

"It's of little consequence, certainly; as it is, they are so many that they must be hanged by divisions. However, as he is within signal distance, let them telegraph 'Pirates now on trial.' He can pull on shore in his gig if he pleases."

It was about noon on the same day that the pirates, and among them Francisco, escorted by a strong guard, were conducted to the Court House, and placed at the bar. The Court House was crowded to excess, for the interest excited was intense.

Many of them who had been wounded in the attack upon the property of Don Cumanos, and afterwards captured, had died in their confinement. Still forty-five were placed at the bar; and their picturesque costume, their bearded faces, and the atrocities which they had committed, created in those present a sensation of anxiety mingled with horror and indignation.

Two of the youngest amongst them had been permitted to turn king's evidence. They had been on board of the *Avenger* but a few months; still their testimony as to the murder of the crews of three West India ships, and the attack upon the property of Don Cumanos, was quite sufficient to condemn the remainder.

Much time was necessarily expended in going through the forms of the court; in the pirates answering to their various names; and lastly, in taking down the detailed evidence of the above men. It was late when the evidence was read over to the pirates; and they were asked if they had anything to offer in their defence. The question was repeated by the judge; when Hawkhurst was the first to speak. To save himself he could scarcely hope; his only object was to prevent Francisco pleading his cause successfully, and escaping the same disgraceful death.

Hawkhurst declared, that he had been some time on board of the *Avenger*;—but that he had been taken out of a vessel and forced to serve against his will, as could be proved by the captain's son, who stood there (pointing to Francisco), who had been in the schooner since her first fitting out:—that he had always opposed the captain, who would not part with him, because he was the only one on board who was competent to navigate the schooner;—that he had intended to rise against him, and take the vessel, having often stimulated the crew so to do; and that, as the other men, as well as the captain's son, could prove, if they chose, he actually was in confinement for that attempt when the schooner was entering the passage to the Caicos; and that he was only released because he was acquainted with the passage, and threatened to be thrown overboard if he did not take her in:—that, at every risk, he had run her on the rocks; and, aware that the captain would murder him, he had shot Cain as he was swimming to the shore, as the captain's son could prove; for he had taxed him with it, and he was actually struggling with him for life, when the officers and boat's crew separated them, and made them both prisoners:—that he hardly expected that Francisco, the captain's son, would tell the truth to save him, as he was his bitter enemy, and, in the business at the Magdalen river, which had been long planned (for Francisco had been sent on shore under the pretence of being wrecked, but, in fact, to ascertain where the booty was, and to assist the pirates in their attack), Francisco had taken that opportunity of putting a bullet through his shoulder, which was well known to the other pirates, and Francisco could not venture to deny. He trusted that the court would order the torture to Francisco, and then he would probably speak the truth; at all events, let him speak now.

When Hawkhurst had ceased to address the court, there was an anxious pause for some minutes. The day was fast declining, and most parts of the spacious Court House were already deeply immersed in gloom; while the light, sober, solemn, and almost sad, gleamed upon the savage and reckless countenances of the prisoners at the bar. The sun had sunk down behind a mass of heavy yet gorgeous clouds, fringing their edges with molten gold. Hawkhurst had spoken fluently and energetically, and there was an appearance of almost honesty in his coarse and deep-toned voice. Even the occasional oaths with which his speech was garnished, but which we have omitted, seemed to be pronounced more in sincerity than in blasphemy, and gave a more forcible impression to his narrative.

We have said, that when he concluded there was a profound silence; and, amid the fast-falling shadows of the evening, those who were present began to feel, for the first time, the awful importance of the drama before them, the number of lives which were trembling upon the single word of "Guilty." This painful silence, this harrowing suspense, was at last broken by a restrained sob from a female; but, owing to the obscurity involving the body of the court, her person could not be distinguished. The wail of woman so unexpected—for who could there be of that sex interested in the fate of these desperate men?—touched the hearts of its auditors, and appeared to sow the first seeds of compassionate and human feeling among those, who had hitherto expressed and felt nothing but indignation towards the prisoners.

The judge upon the bench, the counsel at the bar, and the jury empanelled in their box, felt the force of the appeal; and it softened down the evil impression created by the address of Hawkhurst against the youthful Francisco. The eyes of all were now directed towards the one doubly accused—accused not only by the public prosecutor, but even by his associate in crime,—and the survey was favourable. They acknowledged that he was one whose personal qualities might indeed challenge the love of woman in his pride, and her lament in his disgrace; and, as their regard was directed towards him, the sun, which had been obscured, now pierced through a break in the mass of clouds, and threw a portion of his glorious beams from a window opposite upon him, and him alone, while all the other prisoners who surrounded him were buried more or less in deep shadow. It was at once evident that his associates were bold yet common-place villains—men who owed their courage, their only virtue, perhaps to their habits, to their physical organisation, or the influence of those around them. They were mere human butchers, with the only adjunct, that now that the trade was to be exercised upon themselves, they could bear it with a sullen apathy—a feeling how far removed from true fortitude! Even Hawkhurst, though more commanding than the rest, with all his daring mien and scowl of defiance, looked nothing more than a distinguished ruffian. With the exception of Francisco, the prisoners had wholly neglected their personal appearance; and in them the squalid and sordid look of the mendicant seemed allied with the ferocity of the murderer.

Francisco was not only an exception, but formed a beautiful contrast to the others; and, as the evening beams lighted up his figure, he stood at the bar, if not with all the splendour of a hero of romance, certainly a most picturesque and interesting personage, elegantly, if not richly, attired.

The low sobs at intervals repeated, as if impossible to be checked, seemed to rouse and call him to a sense of the important part which he was called upon to act in the tragedy there and then performing. His face was pale, yet composed; his mien at once proud and sorrowful; his eye was bright, his glance was not upon those in court, but far away, fixed, like an eagle's, upon the gorgeous beams of the setting sun, which glowed upon him through the window that was in front of him.

At last the voice of Francisco was heard, and all in that wide court started at the sound—deep, full, and melodious as the evening chimes. The ears of those present had, in the profound silence, but just recovered from the harsh, deep-toned, and barbarous idiom of Hawkhurst's address; when the clear, silvery, yet manly, voice of Francisco riveted their attention. The jury stretched forth their heads, the counsel and all in court turned anxiously round towards the prisoner; even the judge held up his forefinger, to intimate his wish for perfect silence.

"My lord and gentlemen," commenced Francisco; "when I first found myself in this degrading situation, I had not thought to have spoken, or to have uttered one word in my defence. He that has just now accused me has recommended the torture to be applied; he has already had his wish, for what torture can be more agonising than to find myself where I now am? So tortured, indeed, have I been through a short yet wretched life, that I have often felt that anything short of self-destruction, which would release me, would be a blessing: but within these few minutes I have been made to acknowledge that I have still feelings in unison with my fellow-creatures; that I am not yet fit for death, and all too young, too unprepared, to die; for who would unreluctant leave this world while there is such a beauteous sky to love and look upon, or while there is one female breast who holds him innocent, and has evinced her pity for his misfortunes? Yes, my lord, mercy and pity, and compassion, have not yet fled from earth; and, therefore, do I feel I am too young to die. God forgive me! but I thought they had—for never have they been shown in those with whom, by fate, I have been connected; and it has been from this conviction that I have so often longed for death. And now, may that righteous God, who judges us not here, but hereafter, enable me to prove that I do not deserve an ignominious punishment from my fellow-sinners—men!

"My lord, I know not the subtleties of the laws, nor the intricacy of pleadings. First, let me assert that I have never robbed; but I have restored unto the plundered: I have never murdered; but I have stood between the assassin's knife and his victim. For this have I been hated and reviled by my associates, and for this is my life now threatened by those laws, against which I never have offended. The man who last addressed you has told you that I am the pirate-captain's son. It is the assertion of the only irreclaimable and utterly remorseless villain among those who now stand before you to be judged—the assertion of one, whose glory, whose joy, whose solace, has been blood-shedding.

"My lord, I had it from the mouth of the captain himself, previous to his murder by that man, that I was not his son. His son! thank God, not so. Connected with him and in his power I was most certainly, and most incomprehensibly. Before he died, he delivered me a packet that would have told me who I am; but I have lost it, and deeply have I felt the loss. One only fact I gained from him whom they would call my father, which is, that with his own hand he slew, yes, basely slew, my mother."

The address of Francisco was here interrupted by a low deep groan of anguish, which startled the whole audience. It was now quite dark, and the judge ordered the court to be lighted previous to the defence being continued. The impatience and anxiety of those present were shown in low murmurs of communication, until the lights were brought in. The word "Silence!" from the judge produced an immediate obedience, and the prisoner was ordered to proceed.

Francisco then continued his address, commencing with the remembrances of his earliest childhood. As he warmed with his subject, he became more eloquent; his action became energetical without violence; and the pallid and modest youth gradually grew into the impassioned and inspired orator. He recapitulated rapidly, yet distinctly and with terrible force, all the startling events in his fearful life. There was truth in the tones of his voice—there was conviction in his animated countenance—there was innocence in his open and expressive brow.

All who heard believed; and scarcely had he concluded his address, when the jury appeared impatient to rise and give their verdict in his favour. But the judge stood up, and, addressing the jury, told them that it was his most painful duty to remind them that, as yet, they had heard but assertion, beautiful and almost convincing assertion truly; but still it was not proof.

"Alas!" observed Francisco, "what evidence can I bring forward, except the evidence of those around me at the bar, which will not be admitted? Can I recall the dead from the grave? can I expect those who have been murdered to rise again to assert my innocence? can I expect that Don Cumanos will appear from distant leagues to give evidence in my behalf? Alas! he knows not how I am situated, or he would have flown to my succour. No—no; not even can I expect that the sweet Spanish maiden, the last to whom I offered my protection, will appear in such a place as this, to meet the bold gaze of hundreds!"

"She is here!" replied a manly voice; and a passage was made through the crowd: and Clara, supported by Edward Templemore, dressed in his uniform, was ushered into the box for the witnesses. The appearance of the fair girl, who looked round her with alarm, created a great sensation. As soon as she was sufficiently composed, she was sworn, and gave her evidence as to Francisco's behaviour during the time that she was a prisoner on board of the *Avenger*. She produced the packet which had saved the life of Francisco, and substantiated a great part of his defence. She extolled his kindness and his generosity; and, when she had concluded, every one asked of himself, Can this young man be a pirate and a murderer? The reply was, "It is impossible."

"My lord," said Edward Templemore, "I request permission to ask the prisoner a question. When I was on board of the wreck of the *Avenger*, I found this book floating in the cabin. I wish to ask the prisoner, whether, as that young lady has informed me, it is his!" And Edward Templemore produced the Bible.

"It is mine," replied Francisco.

"May I ask you by what means it came into your possession?"

"It is the only relic left of one who is now no more. It was the consolation of my murdered mother—it has since been mine. Give it to me, sir; I may probably need its support now more than ever."

"Was your mother murdered, say you?" cried Edward Templemore, with much agitation.

"I have already said so; and I now repeat it."

The judge again rose, and recapitulated the evidence to the jury. Evidently friendly to Francisco, he was obliged to point out to them, that, although the evidence of the young lady had produced much which might be offered in extenuation, and induce him to submit it to his Majesty, in hopes of his gracious pardon after condemnation; yet, that many acts in which the prisoner had been involved had endangered his life, and no testimony had been brought forward to prove that he had not, at one time, acted with the pirates, although he might since have repented. They would, of course, remember that the evidence of the mate, Hawkhurst, was not of any value, and must dismiss any impression which it might have made against Francisco. At the same time, he had the unpleasant duty to point out, that the evidence of the Spanish lady was so far prejudicial, that it pointed out the good terms subsisting between the young man and the pirate-captain. Much as he was interested in his fate, he must reluctantly remind the jury, that the evidence on the whole was not sufficient to clear the prisoner; and he considered it their duty to return a verdict of *guilty against all the prisoners at the bar*.

"My lord," said Edward Templemore, a few seconds after the judge had resumed his seat, "may not the contents of this packet, the seal of which I have not ventured to break, afford some evidence in favour of the prisoner? Have you any objection that it should be opened previous to the jury delivering their verdict?"

"None," replied the judge; "but what are its supposed contents?"

"The contents, my lord," replied Francisco, "are in the writing of the pirate-captain. He delivered that packet into my hands previous to our quitting the schooner, stating that it would inform me who were my parents. My lord, in my present situation I claim that packet, and refuse that its contents shall be read in court. If I am to die an ignominious death, at least those who are connected with me shall not have to blush at my disgrace, for the secret of my parentage shall die with me."

"Nay—nay; be ruled by me," replied Edward Templemore, with much emotion: "in the narrative, the handwriting of which can be proved by the king's evidence, there may be acknowledgment of all you have stated, and it will be received as evidence; will it not, my lord?"

"If the hand-writing is proved, I should think it may," replied the judge, "particularly as the lady was present when the packet was delivered, and heard the captain's assertion. Will you allow it to be offered as evidence, young man?"

"No, my lord," replied Francisco: "unless I have permission first to peruse it myself, I will not have its contents divulged,—unless I am sure of an honourable acquittal, the jury must deliver their verdict."

The jury turned round to consult, during which Edward Templemore walked to Francisco, accompanied by Clara, to entreat him to allow the packet to be opened; but Francisco was firm against both of their entreaties. At last the foreman of the jury rose to deliver the verdict. A solemn and awful silence prevailed throughout the court; the suspense was painful to a degree.

"My lord," said the foreman of the jury, "our verdict is——"

"Stop, sir!" said Edward Templemore, as he clasped one arm round the astonished Francisco, and extended his other towards the foreman—"Stop, sir! harm him not! for he is my brother!"

"And my preserver!" cried Clara, kneeling on the other side of Francisco, and holding up her hands in supplication.

The announcement was electrical; the foreman dropped into his seat; the judge and whole court were in mute astonishment. The dead silence was followed by confusion, which, after a time, the judge in vain attempted to put a stop to.

Edward Templemore, Clara, and Francisco, continued to form the same group; and never was there one more beautiful. And now that they were together, every one in court perceived the strong resemblance between the two young men.

Francisco's complexion was darker than Edward's, from his constant exposure, from infancy, to a tropical sun; but the features of the two were the same.

It was some time before the judge could obtain silence in the court; and, when it had been obtained, he was himself puzzled how to proceed.

Edward and Francisco, who had exchanged a few words, were now standing side by side.

"My lord," said Edward Templemore, "the prisoner consents that the packet shall be opened."

"I do," said Francisco, mournfully; "although I have but little hope from its contents. Alas! now that I have everything to live for,—now that I cling to life, I feel as if every chance was gone! The days of miracles have passed; and nothing but the miracle of the reappearance of the pirate-captain from the grave can prove my innocence."

"He reappears from the grave to prove thine innocence, Francisco!" said a deep, hollow voice, which startled the whole court,—and most of all Hawkhurst and the prisoners at the bar. Still more did fear and horror distort their countenances, when into the witness-box stalked the giant form of Cain.

But it was no longer the figure which we have described in the commencement of this narrative: his beard had been removed, and he was pale, wan, and emaciated. His sunken eyes—his hollow cheek—and a short cough, which interrupted his speech, proved that his days were nearly at a close.

"My lord," said Cain, addressing the judge, "I am the pirate Cain,—and was the captain of the *Avenger!* Still am I free. I come here voluntarily, that I may attest the innocence of that young man! As yet, my hand has not known the manacle, or my feet the gyves! I am not a prisoner, nor included in the indictment; and at present my evidence is good! None know me in this court, except those whose testimony, as prisoners, is unavailing; and, therefore, to save that boy, and only to save him, I demand that I may be sworn."

The oath was administered with more than usual solemnity.

"My lord, and gentlemen of the jury,—I have been in court since the commencement of the trial, and I declare that every word which Francisco has uttered in his own defence is true. He is totally innocent of any act of piracy or murder,—the packet would, indeed, have proved as much; but in that packet there are secrets which I wished to remain unknown to all but Francisco; and, rather than it should be opened, I have come forward myself. How that young officer discovered that Francisco is his brother I know not; but, if he also is the son of Cecilia Templemore, it is true. But the packet will explain all.

"And now, my lords, that my evidence is received, I am content: I have done one good deed before I die, and I surrender myself, as a pirate and a foul murderer, to justice. True, my life is nearly closed,—thanks to that villain, there; but I prefer that I should meet that death I merit, as an expiation of my many deeds of guilt."

Cain then turned to Hawkhurst, who was close to him, but the mate appeared to be in a state of stupor; he had not recovered from his first terror, and still imagined the appearance of Cain to be supernatural.

"Villain!" exclaimed Cain, putting his mouth close to Hawkhurst's ear, "double d—d villain! thou'lt die like a dog, and unrevenged! the boy is safe, and I'm alive!"

"Art thou really living?" said Hawkhurst, recovering from his fear.

"Yes, living—yes, flesh and blood; feel, wretch! feel this arm, and be convinced: thou hast felt the power of it before now," continued Cain, sarcastically. "And now, my lord, I have done: Francisco, fare thee well. I loved thee, and have proved my love. Hate not then my memory, and forgive me—yes, forgive me when I'm no more," said Cain, who then turned his eyes to the ceiling of the Court House.—"Yes, there she is, Francisco!—there she is! and see," cried he, extending both arms above his head, "she smiles upon—yes, Francisco, your sainted mother smiles and pardons——"

The sentence was not finished; for Hawkhurst, when Cain's arms were upheld, perceived his knife in his girdle, and, with the rapidity of thought, he drew it out, and passed it through the body of the pirate-captain.

Cain fell heavily on the floor, while the court was again in confusion. Hawkhurst was secured, and Cain raised from the ground.

"I thank thee, Hawkhurst!" said Cain, in an expiring voice; "another murder thou hast to answer for: and you have saved me from the disgrace, not of the gallows, but of the gallows in thy company. Francisco, boy, farewell!" And Cain groaned deeply, and expired.

Thus perished the renowned pirate-captain, who in his life had shed so much blood, and whose death produced another murder—Blood for blood!

The body was removed; and it now remained but for the jury to give their verdict. All the prisoners were found guilty, with the exception of Francisco, who left the dock, accompanied by his newly-found brother, and the congratulations of every individual who could gain access to him.

Chapter XVIII

CONCLUSION

Our first object will be to explain to the reader by what means Edward Templemore was induced to surmise that in Francisco, whom he had considered as a rival, he had found a brother; and also to account for the reappearance of the pirate Cain.

In pursuance of his orders, Edward Templemore had proceeded on board of the wreck of the *Avenger;* and, while his men were employed in collecting articles of great value which were on board of her, he had descended into the cabin, which was partly under water. Here he had picked up a book floating near the lockers, and, on examination, found it to be a Bible.

Surprised at seeing such a book on board of a pirate, he had taken it with him when he returned to the *Enterprise,* and had shown it to Clara, who immediately recognised it as the property of Francisco. The book was saturated with the salt water, and, as Edward mechanically turned over the pages, he referred to the title-page to see if there was any name upon it. There was not: but he observed that the blank or fly-leaf next to the binding had been pasted down, and that there was writing on the other side. In its present state it was easily detached from the cover; and then, to his astonishment, he read the name of Cecilia Templemore — his own mother. He knew well the history; how he had been saved, and his mother and brother supposed to be lost; and it may readily be imagined how great was his anxiety to ascertain by what means her Bible had come into the possession of Francisco. He dared not think Francisco was his brother—that he was so closely connected with one he still supposed to be a pirate: but the circumstance was possible; and, although he had intended to have remained a few days longer, he now listened to the entreaties of Clara, whose peculiar position on board was only to be justified by the peculiar position from which she had been rescued, and, returning that evening to the wreck, he set fire to her, and then made all sail for Port Royal.

Fortunately he arrived, as we have stated, on the day of the trial; and, as soon as the signal was made by the admiral, he immediately manned his gig, and, taking Clara with him, in case her evidence might be of use, arrived at the Court House when the trial was about half over.

In our last chapter but one, we stated that Cain had been wounded by Hawkhurst, when he was swimming on shore, and had sunk: the ball had entered his chest, and passed through his lungs. The contest between Hawkhurst and Francisco, and their capture by Edward, had taken place on the other side of the ridge of rocks, in the adjacent cove; and, although Francisco had seen Cain disappear, and concluded that he was dead, it was not so; he had again risen above the water, and dropping his feet, and finding bottom, he contrived to crawl out, and wade into a cave adjacent, where he laid down to die.

But in this cave there was one of the *Avenger's* boats, two of the pirates, mortally wounded, and the four Kroumen, who had concealed themselves there with the intention of taking no part in the conflict, and, as soon as it became dark, of making their escape in the boat, which they had hauled up dry into the cave.

Cain staggered in, recovered the dry land, and fell. Pompey, the Krouman, perceiving his condition, went to his assistance, and bound up his wound, and the staunching of the blood soon revived the pirate-captain. The other pirates died unaided.

Although the island was searched in every direction, this cave, from the water flowing into it, escaped the vigilance of the British seamen; and when they re-embarked, with the majority of the pirates captured, Cain and the Kroumen were undiscovered.

As soon as it was dark, Cain informed them of his intentions; and, although the Kroumen would, probably, have left him to his fate, yet, as they required his services to know how to steer to some other island, he was assisted into the stern-sheets, and the boat was backed out of the cave.

By the directions of Cain, they passed through the passage between the great island and the northern Cayque, and before daylight were far away from any chance of capture.

Cain had now, to a certain degree, recovered; and knowing that they were in the channel of the small traders, he pointed out to the Kroumen that, if supposed to be pirates, they would inevitably be punished, although not guilty, and that they must pass off as the crew of a small coasting-vessel which had been wrecked. He then, with the assistance of Pompey, cut off his beard as close as he could, and arranged his dress in a more European style. They had neither water nor provisions, and were exposed to a vertical sun. Fortunately for them, and still more fortunately for Francisco, on the second day they were picked up by an American brig, bound to Antigua.

Cain narrated his fictitious disasters, and said nothing about his wound; the neglect of which would certainly have occasioned his death a very few days after he appeared at the trial, had he not fallen by the malignity of Hawkhurst.

Anxious to find his way to Port Royal—for he was indifferent as to his own life, and only wished to save Francisco—he was overjoyed to meet a small schooner, trading between the islands, bound to Port Royal. In that vessel he obtained a passage for himself and the Kroumen, and had arrived three days previous to the trial, and during that time had remained concealed until the day the Admiralty Court assembled.

It may be as well here to remark, that Cain's reason for not wishing the packet to be opened, was, that among the other papers, relative to Francisco, were directions for the recovery of the treasure which he had concealed, and which, of course, he wished to be communicated to Francisco alone.

We will leave the reader to imagine what passed between Francisco and Edward after the discovery of their kindred, and proceed to state the contents of the packet, which the twin brothers now opened in the presence of Clara alone.

We must, however, condense the matter, which was very voluminous. It stated that Cain, whose real name was Charles Osborne, had sailed, in a fine schooner, from Bilboa, for the coast of Africa, to procure a cargo of slaves; and had been out about twenty-four hours, when the crew perceived a boat, apparently with no one in her, floating about a mile a-head of them. The water was then smooth, and the vessel had but little way. As soon as they came up with the boat, they lowered down their skiff to examine her.

The men sent in the skiff soon returned, towing the boat alongside. Lying at the bottom of the boat were found several men, almost dead, and reduced to skeletons; and, in the stern-sheets, a negro-woman, with a child at her breast, and a white female, in the last state of exhaustion.

Osborne was then a gay and unprincipled man, but not a hardened villain and murderer, as he afterwards became; he had compassion and feeling—they were all taken on board the schooner: some recovered—others were too much exhausted. Among those restored was Cecilia Templemore and the infant, who at first had been considered quite dead: but the negro-woman, exhausted by the demands of her nursling and her privations, expired, as she was being removed from the boat. A goat, that fortunately was on board, proved a substitute for the negress; and, before Osborne had arrived off the coast, the child had recovered its health and vigour, and the mother her extreme beauty.

We must now pass over a considerable portion of the narrative. Osborne was impetuous in his passions, and Cecilia Templemore became his victim. He had, indeed, afterwards quieted her qualms of conscience by a pretended marriage, when he arrived at the Brazils with his cargo of human flesh. But that was little alleviation of her sufferings; she, who had been indulged in every luxury, who had been educated with the greatest care, was now lost for ever—an outcast from the society to which she could never hope to return, and associating with those she both dreaded and despised. She passed her days and her nights in tears; and had soon more cause for sorrow from the brutal treatment she received from Osborne, who had been her destroyer. Her child was her only solace; but for him, and the fear of leaving him to the demoralising influence of those about him, she would have lain down and died; but she lived for him—for him attempted to recall Osborne from his career of increasing guilt—bore meekly with reproaches and with blows. At last Osborne changed his nefarious life for one of deeper guilt: he became a pirate, and still carried with him Cecilia and her child.

This was the climax of her misery; she now wasted from day to day, and grief would soon have terminated her existence, had it not been hastened by the cruelty of Cain, who, upon an expostulation on her part, followed up with a denunciation of the consequences of his guilty career, struck her with such violence that she sank under the blow. She expired with a prayer that her child might be rescued from a life of guilt; and, when the then repentant Cain promised what he never did perform, she blessed him, too, before she died.

Such was the substance of the narrative as far as it related to the unfortunate mother of these two young men, who, when they had concluded, sat, hand-in-hand, in mournful silence. This, however, was soon broken by the innumerable questions asked by Edward of his brother, as to what he could remember of their ill-fated parent, which were followed up by the history of Francisco's eventful life.

"And the treasure, Edward," said Francisco—"I cannot take possession of it."

"No, nor shall you either," replied Edward; "it belongs to the captors, and must be shared as prize-money. You will never touch one penny of it; but I shall, I trust, pocket a very fair proportion of it! However, keep this paper, as it is addressed to you."

The admiral had been made acquainted with all the particulars of this eventful trial, and had sent a message to Edward, stating that, as soon as he and his brother could make it convenient, he would be happy to see them at the Penn, as well as the daughter of the Spanish governor, whom he must consider as being under his protection during the time that she remained at Port Royal. This offer was gladly accepted by Clara; and, on the second day after the trial, they proceeded up to the Penn. Clara and Francisco were introduced, and apartments and suitable attendance provided for the latter.

"Templemore," said the admiral, "I'm afraid I must send you away to Porto Rico, to assure the governor of his daughter's safety."

"I would rather you would send some one else, sir, and I'll assure her happiness in the meantime."

"What! by marrying her? Humph! you've a good opinion of yourself! Wait till you're a captain, sir."

"I hope I shall not have to wait long, sir," replied Edward, demurely.

"By-the-bye," said the admiral, "did you not say you have notice of treasure concealed in those islands?"

"My brother has: I have not."

"We must send for it. I think we must send you, Edward. Mr Francisco, you must go with him."

"With pleasure, sir," replied Francisco, laughing; "but I think I'd rather wait till Edward is a captain! His wife and his fortune ought to come together. I think I shall not deliver up my papers until the day of his marriage!"

"Upon my word," said Captain Manly, "I wish, Templemore, you had your commission, for there seems to be so much depending on it—the young lady's happiness, my share of the prize-money, and the admiral's eighth. Really, admiral, it becomes a common cause; and I'm sure he deserves it!"

"So am I, Manly," replied the admiral; "and to prove that I have thought so, here comes Mr Hadley with it in his hand: it wants one little thing to complete it——"

"Which is your signature, admiral, I presume;" replied Captain Manly, taking a pen full of ink, and presenting it to his senior officer.

"Exactly!" replied the admiral, scribbling at the bottom of the paper; "and now—it does not want that. Captain Templemore, I wish you joy!"

Edward made a very low obeisance, as his flushed countenance indicated his satisfaction.

"I cannot give commissions, admiral," said Francisco, presenting a paper in return; "but I can give information—and you will find it not unimportant—for the treasure appears to be of great value."

"God bless my soul! Manly, you must start at daylight!" exclaimed the admiral; "why, there is enough to load your sloop! There!—read it!—and then I will write your orders, and enclose a copy of it, for fear of accident."

"That was to have been my fortune," said Francisco, with a grave smile; "but I would not touch it."

"Very right, boy!—a fine principle! But we are not quite so particular," said the admiral. "Now, where's the young lady? let her know that dinner's on the table."

A fortnight after this conversation, Captain Manly returned with the treasure; and the *Enterprise*, commanded by another officer, returned from Porto Rico, with a letter from the governor in reply to one from the admiral, in which the rescue of his daughter by Edward had been communicated. The letter was full of thanks to the admiral, and compliments to Edward; and, what was of more importance, it sanctioned the union of the young officer with his daughter, with a dozen boxes of gold doubloons.

About six weeks after the above-mentioned important conversation, Mr Witherington, who had been reading a voluminous packet of letters, in his breakfast-room, in Finsbury Square, pulled his bell so violently, that old Jonathan thought his master must be out of his senses. This, however, did not induce him to accelerate his solemn and measured pace; and he made his appearance at the door, as usual, without speaking.

"Why don't that fellow answer the bell?" cried Mr Witherington.

"I am here, sir;" said Jonathan, solemnly.

"Well, so you are! but, confound you!—you come like the ghost of a butler! But who do you think is coming here, Jonathan?"

"I cannot tell, sir."

"But I can!—you solemn old ——! Edward's coming here!—coming home directly!"

"Is he to sleep in his old room, sir?" replied the imperturbable butler.

"No! the best bedroom! Why, Jonathan, he is married—he is made a captain!—Captain Templemore!"

"Yes—sir."

"And he has found his brother, Jonathan; his twin brother!"

"Yes—sir."

"His brother Francis—that was supposed to be lost! But it's a long story, Jonathan!—and a very wonderful one!—his poor mother has long been dead!"

"*In cœlo quies*," said Jonathan, casting up his eyes.

"But his brother has turned up again."

"*Resurgam!*" said the butler.

"They will be here in ten days—so let everything be in readiness, Jonathan. God bless my soul!" continued the old gentleman, "I hardly know what I'm about. It's a Spanish girl, Jonathan!"

"What is, sir?"

"What is, sir?—why, Captain Templemore's wife: and he was tried as a pirate!"

"Who, sir?"

"Who, sir?—why, Francis, his brother! Jonathan, you're a stupid old fellow!"

"Have you any further commands, sir?"

"No—no!—there—that'll do—go away."

And in three weeks after this conversation, Captain and Mrs Templemore, and his brother Frank, were established in the house, to the great delight of Mr Witherington; for he had long been tired of solitude and old Jonathan.

The twin brothers were a comfort to him in his old age: they closed his eyes in peace—they divided his blessing and his large fortune—and thus ends our history of The Pirate!

THE END.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.